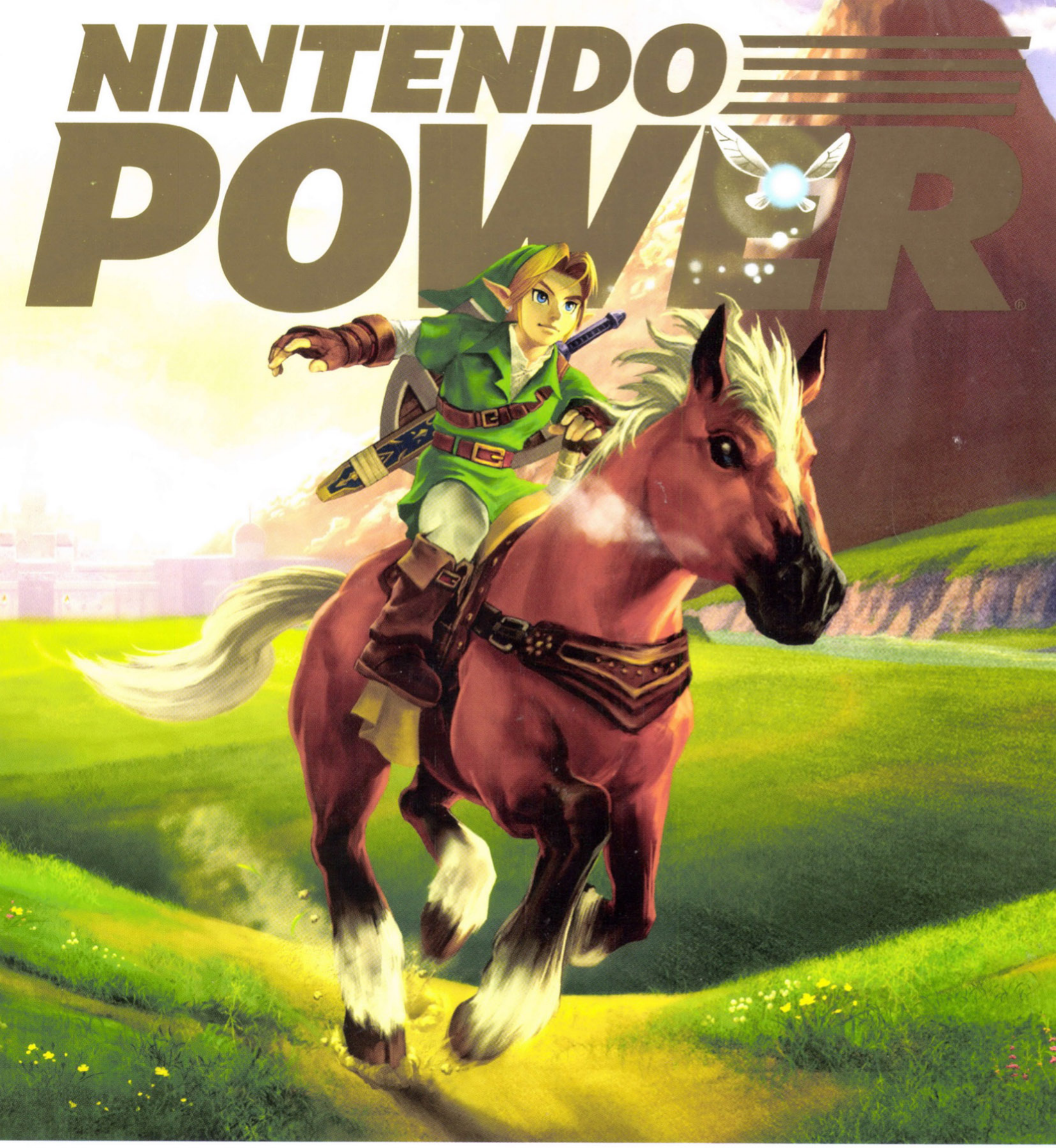
NINTENDO POWER



The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time 3D • Tales of the Abyss • Resident Evil: The Mercenaries 3D • Driver Renegade • Dead or Alive Dimensions • Captain America

267

MAY 2011

SUBSCRIBER EDITION

DEAD OR ALIVE®
Dimensions

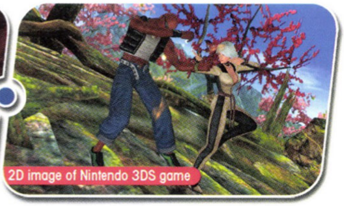
"Looks damn good…gorgeous for a handheld."
-destructoid.com

*" The fighting was fast, fluid, and accurate,
and the level of graphical detail was impressive."*
-GameSpot

ONE MORE TIME, ONE MORE FIGHT

2D image of Nintendo 3DS game

2D image of Nintendo 3DS game



The comprehensive DOA experience, relive the history of one of the most electric fighting franchises of all time. With a new story that spans the timelines of all four DOA installments, a full character roster with new playable characters and some of the best interactive stages the series has to offer. This is it.. step up to the next dimension in fighting!

2D image of Nintendo 3DS game

NINTENDO 3DS™

TECMO KOEI AMERICA CORP.

TECMO®

Team NINJA

DEAD OR ALIVE | I'm a fighter

teamninja-studio.com/doadimensions/us/

DEAD OR ALIVE® Dimensions, Team NINJA, the Team NINJA logo, the TECMO KOEI logo and the TECMO logo are registered trademarks or trademarks of TECMO KOEI GAMES CO., LTD.

©2011 TECMO KOEI GAMES CO., LTD. All rights reserved. LICENSED BY NINTENDO. Trademarks are property of their respective owners. Nintendo 3DS is a trademark of Nintendo. The ESRB ratings icon is a registered trademark of the Entertainment Software Association. All other trademarks are properties of their respective owners.

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Blood
Mild Language
Partial Nudity
Suggestive Themes
Use of Alcohol
Violence

CONTENTS • MAY 2011

Better than the Best 44

The most acclaimed game of all time is back and better than ever as The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time 3D on Nintendo 3DS.

Nintendo 3DS Expert User's Guide 52

If you have a shiny new Nintendo 3DS system, this feature will will help you maximize your fun.

Back from the Abyss 56

Good news, RPG fans: Tales of the Abyss is on its way to North American Nintendo 3DS systems, and we've got the details.

The Secret Is Out 64

If you haven't played DS sleeper hit Nine Hours, Nine Persons, Nine Doors, then you're missing out. Find out why in our postmortem interview.

The Greatest Moments of The Legend of Zelda: Super NES Era 70

We continue our look back at classic Zelda titles with the highlights from The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past.

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: OCARINA OF TIME 3D 44

NINTENDO 3DS
SELECT
HOME
START
POWER

NINTENDO 3DS EXPERT USER'S GUIDE 52

TALES OF THE ABYSS 56

THE GREATEST MOMENTS OF THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: SUPER NES ERA 70

NINE HOURS, NINE PERSONS, NINE DOORS 64

YOU FOUND THE OCARINA!

SWEET POTATO OCARINA $44.95
6 holes (2 thumbhole, octave +2), includes Songbook/Tutorial/Serenades, Lullabies, Minuets

DRAGONTOOTH OCARINA $99.95
12 Hole Ocarina with metallic lustre glaze.
Comes with display stand, Songbook Tutorial,
metal chain, Origin Myth with original songs

DRAGONTOOTH

SPEARHEAD OCARINA $19.95
6 Holes with 2 thumbholes (octave +3)
Comes as a beaded necklace
and Songbook/Tutorial

Plenty of other ocarina styles, songbooks, holsters, carrying cases, video tutorials and demos at www.songbirdocarina.com

Sweet Potato Ocarina

SHIPPING INFO

Shipping & Handling $6 - $8 (1 - 2 weeks for delivery)
PRIORITY Shipping $12 -$14 (2-5 biz days for delivery)
We also ship FedEx for super fast delivery

**Order via our Website
or call Toll Free:
1-866-899-4046**

Songbird Ocarinas

2751 East 11th St. Los Angeles, CA 90023

www.songbirdocarina.com

- Easy To Play
- Ceramic Flute
- Songbook/Tutorial Included
- Minuets, Serenades, Requiems
- Handmade in U.S.A.

Songbird Ocarinas is not affiliated with or endorsed by Nintendo of America, Inc.

NINTENDO POWER

CONTENTS • MAY 2011

DEPARTMENTS

Pulse 6

Power Up 10

Download 28

Previews 34

Captain America: Super Soldier (Wii, DS) 34

Driver Renegade 38

Dual Pen Sports 39

Gabrielle's Ghostly Groove 3D 39

Green Lantern: Rise of the Manhunters 37

James Noire's Hollywood Crimes 40

Reel Fishing Paradise 3D 37

Resident Evil: The Mercenaries 3D 36

Power Profiles 76

Playback 80

Reviews 83

Cartoon Network Punch Time Explosion 89

Dead or Alive Dimensions 84

LEGO Battles: Ninjago 88

Rabbids Travel in Time 3D 89

Rio (DS) 89

Rio (Wii) 89

SpongeBob SquigglePants 87

Thor: God of Thunder (DS) 87

Thor: God of Thunder (Wii) 86

Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell 3D 88

Virtua Tennis 4 88

Community 92

Next Month 96

POWER UP MARIO & SONIC AT THE LONDON 2012 OLYMPIC GAMES 10

POS 4/8
LAP 1/3
TIME 00' 12"91
MPH 191
Boost available!

DOWNLOAD FAST RACING LEAGUE 29

5630
00'40"69

PREVIEW RESIDENT EVIL: THE MERCENARIES 3D 36

REVIEW DEAD OR ALIVE DIMENSIONS 84

GAME INDEX

5 in 1 Mahjong (DW) 32
Absolute Baseball (DW) 32
Anonymous Notes Chapter 1: From the Abyss (DW) 33
Arcade Essentials (WW) 32
Atsumete! Kirby (DS) 14
Bit.Trip Saga (N3DS) 18
Bomberman Hero (VC) 32
BurgerTime (WW) 28
Captain America: Super Soldier (Wii, DS) 34
Cartoon Network Punch Time Explosion (3DS) 89
Centipede: Infestation (Wii, N3DS) 11
Crush 3D (N3DS) 22
Cubic Ninja (N3DS) 11
Dead or Alive Dimensions (N3DS) 84
Dreamwalker (DW) 30
Driver Renegade (N3DS) 38
Dual Pen Sports (N3DS) 39
A Fairy Tale (DW) 33
FAST Racing League (WW) 29
G.G Series D-Tank (DW) 33
G.G Series Horizontal Bar (DW) 33
Gabrielle's Ghostly Groove 3D (N3DS) 39
Go Series Earth Saver (DW) 33
Green Lantern: Rise of the Manhunters (N3DS) 37
Harvest Moon: The Tale of Two Towns (DS) 18
Harvest Moon 3D: The Tale of Two Towns (N3DS) 18
Heavy Fire: Black Arms (WW) 32
James Noire's Hollywood Crimes (N3DS) 40
JellyCar 2 (DW) 33
The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past (SNES) 70
The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time 3D (N3DS) 44
LEGO Battles: Ninjago (DS) 88
Liight (WW) 32
Mario & Sonic at the London 2012 Olympic Games (Wii, N3DS) 10
Mystery Case Files: Dust to Dust (Wii) 18
Natsume Championship Wrestling (VC) 32
Nine Hours, Nine Persons, Nine Doors (DS) 64
Pandora's Tower (Wii) 20
Planet Fish (WW) 32
Plants vs. Zombies (DW) 33
Popeye (NES) 80
Rabbids Travel in Time 3D (3DS) 89
Rabi Laby (DW) 33
Reel Fishing Paradise 3D (N3DS) 37
Resident Evil: Revelations (N3DS) 11
Resident Evil: The Mercenaries 3D (N3DS) 36
Rio (DS, Wii) 89
Rocket Slime 3 (N3DS) 14
Shapo (DW) 33
Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Survivor 2 (DS) 14
Simply Solitaire (DW) 33
Spider-Man: Edge of Time (Wii, DS, N3DS) 19
SpongeBob SquigglePants (N3DS) 87
Super Bonk (VC) 32
Tales of the Abyss (N3DS) 56
Thor: God of Thunder (DS) 87
Thor: God of Thunder (Wii) 86
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell 3D (N3DS) 88
Virtua Tennis 4 (Wii) 88
Wii Play: Motion (Wii) 18

DS = NINTENDO DS
DW = DSiWARE
N3DS = NINTENDO 3DS
NES = NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
SNES = SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
VC = VIRTUAL CONSOLE
Wii = Wii
WW = WiiWARE

POWER UP 🟥
DOWNLOAD 🟦
PREVIEW ⬛
FEATURE ⬜
PLAYBACK 🟧
REVIEW 🟦

GET IN THE GAME

DigiPen Institute of Technology proudly presents a two-week summer workshop series for video game and technology enthusiasts in Grade 8 and beyond. These workshops are specially designed to introduce participants of all experience levels to the fundamentals of:

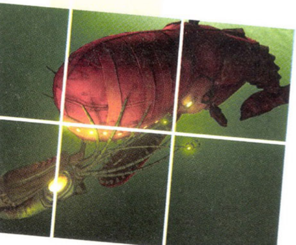
- **Video Game Programming**
- **3D Computer Animation**
- **Game Design**
- **Robotics**

Not yet in Grade 8?
ProjectFUN also offers Junior Workshops in both video game design and animation for students who are in Grades 5-7.

For more information, visit:
http://workshops.digipen.edu

>> WHAT ARE YOU DOING THIS SUMMER?

- **Make a video game!**
- **Create an animation!**
- **Design your own games!**
- **Build a robot!**



DigiPen ProjectFUN WORKSHOPS

DigiPen INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

9931 Willows Road NE, Redmond, WA 98052
Phone: (425) 558-0299 • Toll-Free (866) 478-5236

Pulse

Classic Comeback

Chris Slate

I've never been happier that my memory isn't perfect. Because when I sit down to play The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time 3D—after not touching the N64 original in over a decade—it will almost feel like I'm experiencing a brand-new adventure. And that's exactly how the game will be for a new generation of fans, who missed out on the 1998 classic. There is often debate over whether beloved games, films, or music should be remade, but in my opinion, exposing a landmark title like Ocarina of Time to an even bigger audience can only be a good thing. Games are especially well-suited to being redone, because improvements in technology can remove barriers that may have hindered the development of the original titles. And while all-new games offer fresher experiences, with a remake you're almost guaranteed that the end product will be amazing if the source material was great. A remake can also be a way for a series to rediscover itself, such as with the upcoming Star Fox 64 3D. Since the Star Fox series has been on a bit of a slide, revisiting its best game could be just the thing to put Fox and company back on track. Not every title deserves to be remade, but if developers want to make great games even better, I say bring 'em on.

CHRIS SLATE **EDITOR IN CHIEF**

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA
RESIDENT EVIL THE MERCENARIES 3D
LEGO STAR WARS III
NINTENDO POWER
Nintendo's flying franchise returns with PILOTWINGS RESORT
13 GAMES REVIEWED
NINTENDO 3DS SOARS!
REVEALED The launch games you've GOT to get!

V266 APRIL 2011

Chris Slate here, back once again to answer your letters while performing "Rapper's Delight" on my ocarina. But first, this month's special letter request: if you could have Nintendo announce anything you wanted at E3, what would you choose? Send your responses to the address on page 8, and we'll print the best ones!

LETTERS

Mii Melee

First off, let me say that I *love* taking pictures with my AR Cards on Nintendo 3DS. And this got me thinking—what if some of the NP staff members got into an all-out brawl? So, I decided to see what would happen. In the attached image, there's Chris Slate, being the editor in chief that he is, just standing there proclaiming himself as the victor. Then we have Steve Thomason running for momma from Chris Hoffman, obviously because he hassled the Hoff. And for some reason, we have Cody Martin punching Justin Cheng. I wonder why...? Finally, we see Phil Theobald pushing Casey Loe. Meanie! —**HASAN F.**

Nice photo, Hasan—it reminds me of any old day at the office!

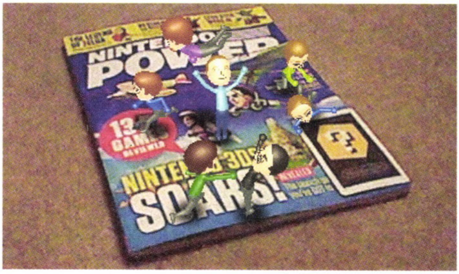
Never Too Young

After reading your article on the 25th anniversary of the NES in Vol. 260, I knew that I needed to experience that groundbreaking piece of history, and got my hands on an NES this past Christmas. Thank you, Nintendo Power, for showing me that old-school games still rule. —**GOLDFISH-BOY**

The Terrible Truth

While reading the background story for Super Mario Bros. in the Super Mario All-Stars manual, I discovered that Bowser, using powerful magic, tuned all the Toads in the Mushroom Kingdom into bricks, and that only the captured Princess Peach could undo the spell. Does this mean that, every time Mario breaks a brick block, he is killing a Toad?

—**PRINCESS TOMATO**



Chris determined who got to play The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time 3D for this month's cover story in the usual NP way: a no-holds-barred battle royal!

Your Star Power on Waluigi made me feel kind of bad for the guy. I mean, all the other Nintendo characters get to star in their own games—even Princess Peach has her own title! No wonder Waluigi is so bad; he never gets his chance to shine. Here's to Waluigi getting his own game in the future. —**KING BROCCOLI**

STAR POWER

Waluigi

This peculiar purple prankster is the troublemaking yin to Luigi's heroic yang, but we can't help but love the poor guy.

CAREER GRAPH

OUR FAVORITE WALUIGI GAMES

"Everybody cheated! Next time I cheat! Heh heh heh!"

Trust the Triforce

I have a renewed faith in math. During the math part of the CMTs, there was one question that had to do with triangles. When I see triangles, I think of one thing: the Triforce. One of the questions asked to divide a triangle into four equal parts. Of course, as always, the Triforce solved all problems.
—**PIKMINLINK**

Bring Back Billy

It would be awesome if Sega made a new Billy Hatcher game for the Nintendo 3DS. The original GameCube title is one of my all-time favorite games, and maybe more people could experience the series on the wonderful new handheld! —**MICHAEL W.**

What? You mean the GameCube game about the boy dressed up like a chicken? I don't know.... [With a crack of thunder and the speed of lightning, executive editor Steve Thomason drop-kicks Chris out of his chair and seizes his keyboard.] Finally, somebody is talking sense around here! That would indeed be awesome, and, more importantly, you are awesome for realizing it. Sadly, the odds of such a project coming to fruition are pretty slim, but you might see some other long-forgotten Sega franchises return for the N3DS in the near future....

Duck Season

After playing with both my old copy of Duck Hunt and my brand-new Nintendo 3DS yesterday, I thought that maybe Nintendo should finally make a sequel to Duck Hunt for the N3DS. The gyro-sensor technology would work great, and maybe I could finally blast that annoying dog for a change. —**DREW H.**

That's not a bad idea! I can easily picture a Duck Hunt AR game kind of like Face Raiders, only you move the system around to find and shoot ducks. Maybe the dog could pop up on the bottom screen between rounds, and if he laughs at your performance, you could "punch" his face (by tapping the touch screen) repeatedly for a 10-hit combo. Or maybe you could even ditch the ducks, and just put out a game where you finally get to beat up that disrespectful dog. I'd drop a couple of bucks in the Nintendo 3DS eShop to finally settle that score.

A new Billy Hatcher game for Nintendo 3DS? Cock-a-doodle-*do it*, Sega!

Cheat Chat

In Vol. 266, Cream the Rabbit was angry at her (his?) friend because that friend "cheated" at Donkey Kong Country Returns by exploiting the temporary invincibility that is granted after taking damage. I believe that if a game is intentionally programmed a certain way, it is okay to utilize that programming to gain an advantage. For example, in Super Metroid, many players have used the wall-jump technique to visit areas of the map out of order. It becomes cheating when you start to abuse unintentional glitches. Although, who does cheating really hurt? If someone wants to ruin their gaming experience by cheating, that's their loss.
—**PROFESSORMAPLE**

I think cheating is in the eye of the beholder. If a challenge becomes too much trouble to enjoy—like beating Shadow Link in Zelda II without using the "crouch in the corner" trick—I will sometimes take the cheap way. It's a question of whether or not *you* feel that you are cheating. In a multiplayer game, however, it gets more complicated. I don't like snaking in Mario Kart DS because I don't think it fits the spirit of the game and doing so limits the need to use a lot of shortcuts and items. Feature, trick, exploit, bug, or cheat? It's whatever you see it as while you're holding the controller.
—**SLINGSHOT DAVE**

DON'T HASSLE THE HOFF

Hey Hoffman, I noticed in the holiday issue that you're taking applications for a new nemesis, so I figured I'd apply.

Name: Erynn

Age: It's a secret to everybody

Gender: Female

Current Location: Canada

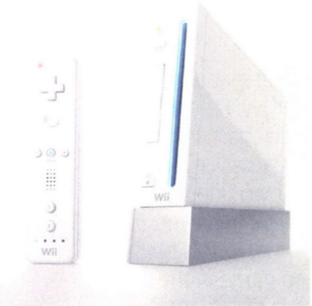
Facts:

- Everyone is my ex.
- Knows an immortal guy.
- Is the ultimate Super Paper Mario fanatic, and will hurt anyone who insults it. Badly.
- Has way too many fake identities.
- Hates ketchup.
- Loves milk.
- Has friends in low places.

—**ERYNN**

The Hoff says: I was considering this application for a minute, but I don't think it'll work out. You see, milk is also my personal beverage of choice. In fact, a few years ago when I met Mr. T at the pancake house, I outperformed him in the milk-drinking department, and that's a fact. When you can say the same, maybe you'll have a chance as my nemesis. Next, please!

My favorite Nintendo system launch was the one for Wii. I had saved up over $500 for the console, controllers, games, etc. My two friends and I were the first in line, and sat outside of Walmart for 25 hours in the freezing cold of November. (I wore at least five layers of clothes.) And you know what? It was so fun and exciting that I would do it all over again. —**SCOTT**



Which Nintendo system launch do you most fondly remember?

For me, it was none other than the Game Boy Advance. When I first played Wario Land 4 I was amazed and dazzled by its better quality. I bought the system a few days later, and I still it have it and my GBA SP to this day. —**FISHERSPOT**

Nintendo GameCube, the first console I bought outright by myself. The tiny, deceptively simple cube shape...the adorable handle (which I *did* use when going to a friend's house)...the sexy-cute game discs...heretofore unseen graphical and sound quality.... Hell, the *logo chime*! Wave Race: Blue Storm! Super Monkey Ball! Luigi's Mansion! Pikmin! GameCube, you are—and always will be—the best. —**SIR CUCUMBER**

Even though I got my Wii very easily, I remember the day very fondly. When the system came out, I planned to wait out the storm until everyone already had a Wii so that I wouldn't have to stand in those ridiculously long lines. But when I was scanning the shelves at Walmart, I found a Wii! I bought it and ran out of the building before anyone would see. —**BRENDAN**

The release of the Nintendo 3DS *will* be my favorite launch, because I didn't get any of my past systems until five or more years after they released! —**JACK J.**

I fondly remember the launch of the Super NES. My mother bought it for me as a present and I played the poor old thing to death. And I'm happy to say that it still works! I treasure all of my memories of getting new Nintendo systems; I was always very excited. —**TIM J.**

My fondest launch memory is of the e-Reader. OK, so it's more of an attachment than a system, but it stands out in my mind the most. Why? Because up to that point, systems used only cartridges—nothing was ever really new besides the improvements in graphics and gameplay. The e-Reader, on the other hand, allowed you to play full games and add new game content by scanning cards. It was a cool concept. I would love it if the Nintendo 3DS could scan e-Reader cards with its camera to add new games and game content. —**MARIOMANX**

I wasn't around for the NES or Super NES, so my favorite launch was the one for Wii. The system came at a time when nobody thought motion control was possible, so it shocked all of us, even people who didn't consider themselves to be video game players. I wanted a Wii so bad that I made my dad wake up at six in the morning to go wait in line outside our nearest game store. The launch was special for me not only because it was my first console, but because it offered a whole new experience. I'll never forget the first time I played Wii Sports Bowling, made a Mii, or used motion control. Thank you, Nintendo, for making memorable moments like these and many others. —**ALFRED CHICKEN**

To say that I was excited about the launch of the GBA SP is an understatement. I bought the system as soon as KB Toys would let me, and I delighted in the fact that I would no longer have to be tethered to a power charger or batteries for the first time in the Game Boy line. What a glorious day! —**UTOPIANMACHINE**

PLEASE WRITE US

pulse@nintendopower.com

OR VIA CARRIER PIGEON AT

Nintendo Power/Pulse
c/o Future US
4000 Shoreline Court, Ste. 400
South San Francisco, CA 94080

TIPS FOR GETTING YOUR LETTER PUBLISHED:

Understand that the magazine staff is separate from Nintendo; we don't make the games.

Don't send links to game coverage on the Web—trust us; we see it all.

Don't ask about the status of upcoming games, or whether certain games will be announced; if we have that info, we'll always tell you.

NINTENDO POWER

LON LON RANCH HANDS

EDITOR IN CHIEF **Chris Slate**
EXECUTIVE EDITOR **Steve Thomason**
SENIOR EDITOR **Chris Hoffman**
ASSOCIATE EDITOR **Justin Cheng**
ART DIRECTOR **John Seeger Gilman**
CREATIVE DIRECTOR **Chris Imlay**
CONTRIBUTING DESIGNER **Rebekah Lane**
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS **Patrick Cunningham, Andrew Hayward, Casey Loe, Nathan Meunier, David F. Smith, Phil Theobald**
COPY EDITOR **Candace Cunningham**
INTERNS **Cody Martin**
LICENSING MANAGER **Frances Wall Jha**

BUSINESS
VICE PRESIDENT—GAMES **Kelley Corten - 650.745.9225**
VP OF SALES AND MARKETING **Rachelle Considine – rconsidine@futureus.com - 650.238.2505**
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR INTEGRATED SALES **Nate Hunt – nhunt@futureus.com - 415.269.5408**
REGIONAL SALES DIRECTOR **Isaac Ugay – iugay@futureus.com - 949.305.0767**
REGIONAL SALES MANAGER **Rachel Campos – rcampos@futureus.com - 650.745.9207**
ACCOUNT MANAGER **Arthur St. Germain - astgermain@futureus.com - 650.238.2571**
DETROIT CONSUMER MANAGER **Alan Dickinson – alandmedia@comcast.net - 248.792.2408**
ADVERTISING COORDINATOR **Heidi Hapin – hhapin@futureus.com**
SENIOR MARKETING MANAGER **Andrea Recio-Ang – arecio-ang@futureus.com**
ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE **Ashley Kardel – akardel@futureus.com**

PRODUCTION
PRODUCTION DIRECTOR **Michael Hollister**
PRODUCTION MANAGER **Larry Briseno**
PRINT ORDER COORDINATOR **Jennifer Lim**

CONSUMER MARKETING
VICE PRESIDENT CONSUMER MARKETING **Rich McCarthy**
CIRCULATION DIRECTOR **Crystal Hudson**
NEWSSTAND DIRECTOR **Bill Shewey**
CONSUMER MARKETING OPERATIONS DIRECTOR **Lisa Radler**
RENEWAL & BILLING MANAGER **Mike Hill**
BUSINESS MANAGER **Elliot Kiger**
SR. ONLINE CONSUMER MARKETING MANAGER **Jennifer Trinkner**
CUSTOMER SERVICE MANAGER **Mike Frassica**

FUTURE US, Inc.
4000 Shoreline Court,
Suite 400, South San
Francisco, CA 94080
www.futureus.com

PRESIDENT **John Marcom**
VP/CFO **John Sutton**
HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR **Nancy Durlester DuBois**

FUTURE PLC
30 Monmouth St., Bath, Avon, BA1 2BW, England
Tel +44 1225 442244 / www.futureplc.com

NON-EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN: Roger Parry
CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Stevie Spring
GROUP FINANCE DIRECTOR: John Bowman

Nintendo Power Customer Care
P.O. Box 5770, Harlan, IA 51593-1270
1-866-941-8368
For Subscription Problems Only!
nintendopower@cdsfulfillment.com.
http://service.futureus-inc.com/
REPRINTS: For reprints, contact Reprint Management Services, 717.399.1900 ext. 100

Game trademarks and copyrights are property of their respective owners. TM, ®, the Nintendo DS logo and the Wii logo are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2011 Nintendo.

ISSN: 1041-9551

Nintendo Power magazine is published by Future US, Inc. under an official licensing agreement with Nintendo of America Inc. Future US is a wholly independent company from Nintendo, and the opinions and views expressed in this publication are solely those of the magazine's writers and do not represent official communication by, or on behalf of, Nintendo.

What Nintendo fans think, want, and do

The SCORE

WEIGH IN ON NEXT MONTH'S TOPICS AT WWW.NINTENDOPOWER.COM/POLLS.

8 OUT OF 10

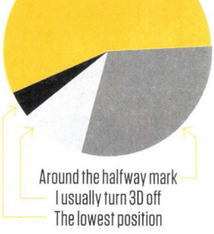
PLAYERS PREFER ARCADE-STYLE RACING GAMES TO SIMULATIONS

EIGHTY-FIVE

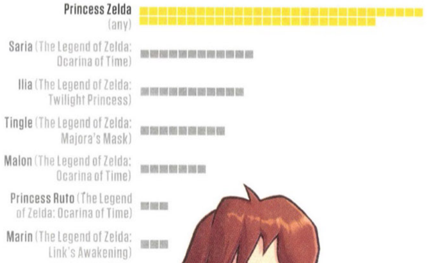
PERCENT OF NINTENDOGS ARE NEGLECTED ON DS

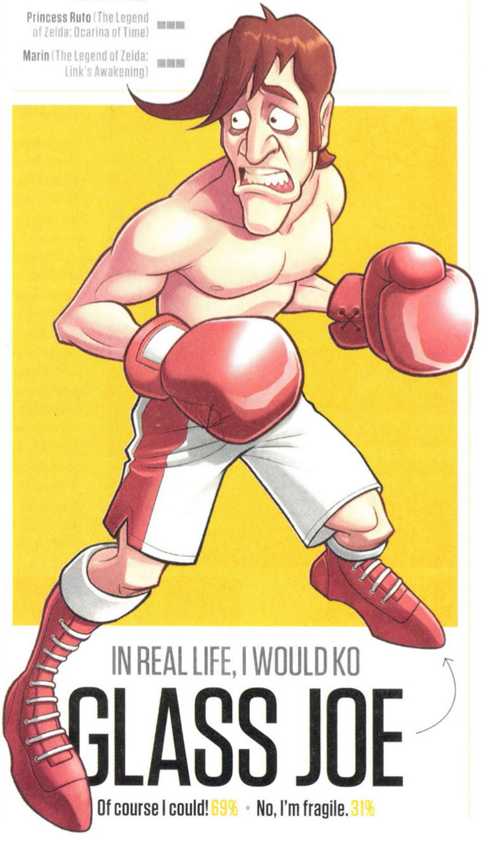
I PUT MY 3D DEPTH SLIDER AT...

FULL BLAST



WHO MAKES THE BEST SIGNIFICANT OTHER FOR LINK?



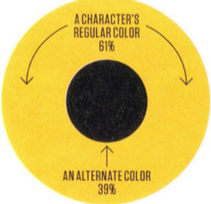


IN REAL LIFE, I WOULD KO

GLASS JOE

Of course I could! 69% • No, I'm fragile. 31%

WHICH DO YOU PICK IN FIGHTING GAMES?



WHICH IS THE BEST NAME FOR A NINJA?

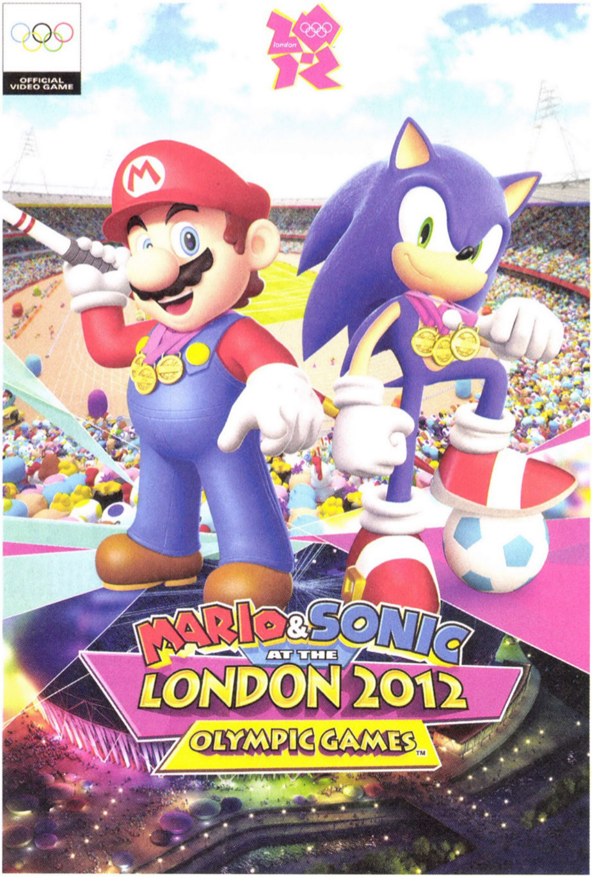
45%

RYU HYABUSA

17% Leonardo
15% Hayate
12% Ebisumaru
6% Kid Niki
5% Joe Musashi

WHICH METROID WEAPON IS BETTER?

POWER UP


OFFICIAL VIDEO GAME
london
MARIO & SONIC AT THE LONDON 2012 OLYMPIC GAMES TM

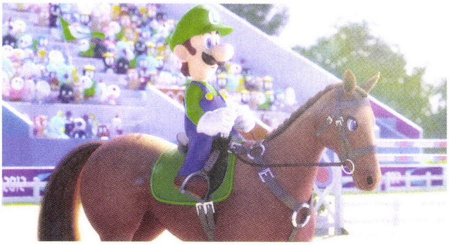
London Calling

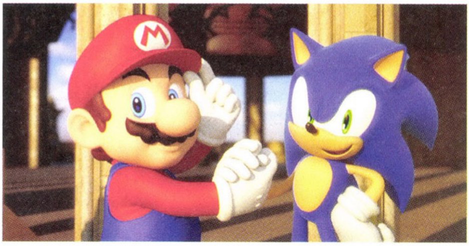
Gaming's greatest mascots are back in training for Mario & Sonic at the London 2012 Olympic Games.

THE SUMMER OLYMPICS may be a whole year away, but Sonic and Mario are already lining up at their starting blocks. After selling a combined 19 million copies of their previous Olympic crossovers, it's hard to blame them for being excited to get the team back together.

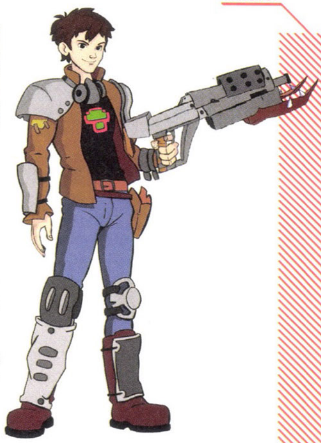
This time the pair will be competing on the Nintendo 3DS handheld as well as the Wii console. We don't yet know how the N3DS version will be structured, but the game is slated to feature more than 50 different Olympics-themed activities that are playable in both single- and multiplayer modes. Sega is promising to exploit the various unique control systems that are available on the platform, so expect to give your new handheld's internal gyro sensor a good workout.

On the Wii version, the returning disciplines of athletics, aquatics, and table tennis will be joined by football and equestrian events, among others. Sega is also promising an ambitious new roster of Dream Events, the over-the-top fantasy versions of Olympic events that were the fan-favorite features of the previous two games. **—CASEY L.**





For 'Pede's Sake!

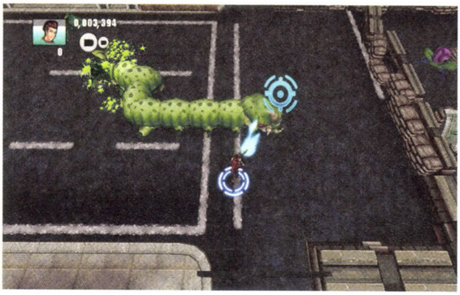


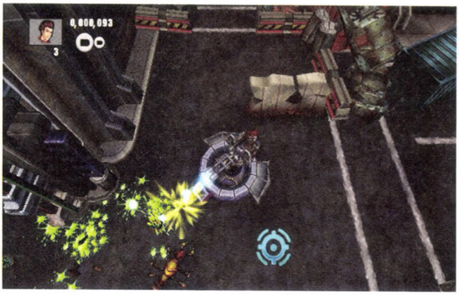
The bugs are back as **Centipede: Infestation** crawls toward Nintendo systems.

FANS OF CLASSIC-ARCADE MAINSTAYS can thank developer WayForward (Contra 4, A Boy and His Blob) for bringing a new iteration of Centipede to Wii and N3DS this fall with Centipede: Infestation. Intriguingly, their reimagining of the old-school, post-nuclear shooter converts it to a run-'n'-gun directional shooter in the style of Smash TV.

Players assume the role of Max (or Rivet, in co-op mode) as he defends Maisy's wasteland-repairing gardens from wave after wave of radiation-enhanced bugs. The bug-squirting action spans 40 levels and 5 bosses; players need only survive to complete the game, but secondary objectives and high-score challenges provide gamers with replay incentive, as achieving these goals unlocks seeds, which in turn add weapons to the player's arsenal.

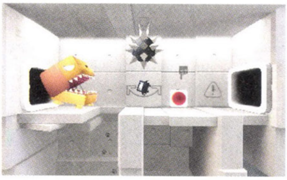
Though the game features on-the-fly power-ups that provide stat buffs (increased health, firepower, speed, etc.), the arsenal system sounds considerably more interesting. Players default to an unlimited-ammo peashooter, but may pluck limited-ammo weapon upgrades from a personal garden maintained by Maisy. Once a weapon is plucked it starts to regrow for time-delayed reuse. Players can tend their gardens between stages, effectively choosing their loadouts while integrating newly acquired seeds/weapons. **—PATRICK C.**

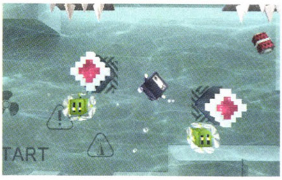




Gyroscopic Action, Cubed

Ubisoft's **Cubic Ninja** proves that even in 3D, it's hip to be square.





WHEN YOU HEAR THE PHRASE "ninja action," a GameCube-esque block wobbling around a world full of spiked pits and conveyer belts may not be the first thing that comes to mind—but that's all part of Cubic Ninja's quirky charm. The game defaults to a Monkey Ball style of gameplay, in which players rotate the Nintendo 3DS to control their hero with the system's internal gyro sensor. (That mode is played with the 3D off, but the game also offers a secondary Circle Pad control scheme that better supports 3D visuals.) The game will ship this summer with 100 built-in levels, but an in-game level-construction utility will allow players to create levels of their own and convert them into QR codes to share with their friends. **—CASEY L.**

Bite of Evil

We were already pretty excited about Resident Evil: The Mercenaries 3D (see our preview of the mature-themed game on page 36), but its prospects have grown even more enticing with the announcement that each copy will include a playable demo of Resident Evil: Revelations. Itchy tasty!

Dimension Man

Nintendo 3DS general producer **Hideki Konno** discusses the release of Nintendo's latest groundbreaking handheld—and what players can look forward to next.

Though he's best known for working on games such as the Mario Kart series, Luigi's Mansion, and the Nintendogs series, Hideki Konno recently took on a new role: overseeing the creation and development of the Nintendo 3DS hardware. If you've had a chance to play the system and experience its stunning glasses-free 3D visuals, then you'll probably agree that Nintendo couldn't have picked a better man for the job. Not only was Konno ultimately responsible for all of the handheld's functionality, but he also continued to simultaneously work on software, such as nintendogs + cats. With the system out on store shelves, we were given the opportunity to sit down with Konno and discuss all things pertaining to the Nintendo 3DS, from the decisions that shaped the system to the latest news on the next Mario Kart. —CHRIS H.

NINTENDO POWER Now that the Nintendo 3DS hardware is finished and on shelves, how do you feel?

HIDEKI KONNO Well, we've been working on it for the last two and a half years, so I guess the first feeling is a sense of relief that everything went well and it was able to be launched.

What do you think of consumer reactions so far? [Note: At the time of this interview, the system had just launched in Japan only.]

To be honest...I haven't had any chance to hear any of the feedback from consumers in Japan yet. However, I have heard from some of our staff members that people who've made the purchase are pleased with it, and StreetPass seems to be something that they're utilizing at this point.

What's next for you personally? Are you going to continue to be involved with the hardware, working on updates to get additional functionality put in, or is it going to be mostly software for you? Maybe a vacation first?

Well, I've been working on hardware and software at the same time throughout the production process of Nintendo 3DS. And now that we're done with that and nintendogs + cats is finished, I'm gearing up to switch over to Mario Kart.

Internet
1212
1/19 (Wed) 10:00
2D image of Nintendo 3DS game
3D
OFF
Mii
X
Y
A
B
SELECT
HOME
START
POWER

Being a member of [Mario creator] Mr. [Shigeru] Miyamoto's department, our main responsibility is software development, but we also, at the same time, collaborate with the hardware teams. So looking at it from that point of view, as a member of EAD, I'm going to be touching and interacting with more products than just Mario Kart—a whole variety of things.

As the overall producer of Nintendo 3DS, my job is not done. We just went through launch, but we're definitely not finished. I'm going to be looking at the software lineup for the system for the next two years out, looking at scheduling, and as you mentioned earlier, I'm also looking at the updates too.

With the system just coming out, we're really only getting a taste of what developers can do with it. What do you think its untapped features are, and what kind of things do you think developers will create with a little more time?

First of all, Nintendo 3DS includes a ton of features—it has the Motion Sensor, Gyro Sensor, AR functionally, the Nintendo 3DS cameras. Really what I want to see is developers using all of these features in unique ways to create new experiences. While these aren't meant to be sample products, I think we really did a great job utilizing the system features and functions to create the applications that are already preinstalled. I think there's a lot of interesting gameplay there, and I hope that developers will look at what we've done and maybe take that as an inspiration to create even more unique gameplay experiences.

Let's say I have some friends that don't regard the Nintendo 3DS as "all that." What's the one thing I should show them to prove the concept and impress my friends?

Only one? That's tough! [Laughs] As the staff has been working on this, I've been paying very close attention to what *their* reactions are to the things that we're creating, and AR Games have always gotten a really good reaction. You know, augmented reality isn't by any stretch of the imagination a new technology, but seeing it in 3D allows you to really feel the depth of what's happening. Because we've done what I think is a really good job on incorporating good gameplay elements, it isn't like any sort of tech demo for augmented reality that I've ever seen before. For each of the preinstalled applications/features of the system—we've been working on them so long that I have a list of memories attached to each one, so being forced to choose just one of them is a really difficult thing to do.

Speaking of AR, what do you think lies in the future of AR gaming? Does Nintendo have specific plans to follow up the built-in games?

ALL SCREENSHOTS HAVE BEEN CAPTURED IN 2D MODE.

Want to impress your friends with the Nintendo 3DS? The system's general producer, Hideki Konno, suggests showing them the built-in AR Games [above].

"We really want to bring a bunch of new elements into [Mario Kart for Nintendo 3DS.]"

Well, it seems that AR technology is going to become even more widely known and popular. I think it's going to be something that people will want to play around with, whether that's on the developer side or the consumer side. It's already generating a ton of ideas within the Nintendo development teams, and we've been hearing ideas come from outside developers as well.

Where did the idea for Play Coins come from, and how do you see them fitting into the overall plans for Nintendo 3DS?
I'll answer in reverse order—in terms of how I see software developers using the Play Coins, it's really up to them.... There's a lot of possibilities and different ways that they can implement that. As far as where the idea for Play Coins came from—really, one of the original goals of Nintendo 3DS is to have people carry it around. We want people to take it out with them. So one extra bit of motivation for them is if you take your system with you, it'll count your steps and you'll receive a reward for it.

You've mentioned brainstorming for the hardware by putting ideas on sticky notes. What sticky-note ideas didn't get used?
There are mountains of those. [Laughs] But there's a possibility of using those down the line, so I'd rather not get into that.

What aspect of Nintendo 3DS were you happiest with?
I guess it'd have to be the 3D display. That wasn't part of the original spec; 3D came into the process midway, and it was something that we thought would be nice to do. So, we did it. After that would be StreetPass—with the original Nintendogs for the Nintendo DS we already had a sticky note with communication features, and we had already implemented them, but it just didn't work out as well as we planned. So we took that sticky note and stuck it up again, saying that this time would be better, and it is.

The built-in software has such a variety of features; are there even more things you wish you could have accomplished?
Well, I think overall the included features surpassed our initial expectations. Originally, a lot of these ideas were given out to the individual application directors who took them back to their individual teams. So even though we had this original sticky note that said "StreetPass"—and I had my own idea of what that would be—in reality, the team that took control of it created something that branched off from that original expectation. But to be honest, they all were more interesting and better and exceeded my own expectations. So they didn't meet my expectations, but...in a good way. They went beyond them or in different or in more unique ways.

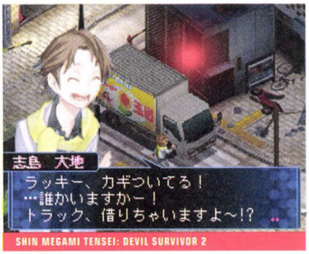
For example, my original goal with the StreetPass Mii Plaza was just to make a place where people could exchange Mii characters. But look at what we've got: Find Mii, and there's also a puzzle-exchange feature. So my expectation for a place where you can exchange Mii characters was taken and built into something even bigger and more exciting.

What's something that's come back from third-party developers that's really impressed or surprised you in the way the hardware functionality has been used?
I really think that each of the software-development teams have all created titles that embody their company's individual characteristics. So they all feel true to, and all express, what those companies have been striving to do. And I feel that everything they've done has been really impressive. One example would have to be Super Street Fighter IV—their online matching is great. It just seems like that would be really fun to take part in.

What games would you like to see come out first for the 3D classics?
We haven't really talked too much about the lineup or any of the details of the 3D classics. That being said, the 3D classics—what it does is the program is designed to take these old classic, favorite games and reinvent them using 3D technology and then distribute and display them in 3D, of course. In my own personal opinion, I would like to see some arcade games make their way into the 3D classic lineup. At last year's E3 I believe we showed Xevious, and that was one of the arcade games we had seen remade into and shown on the Nintendo 3DS in 3D. I think that was a really neat play experience, and one I'd like to see.

How are things going with Mario Kart for Nintendo 3DS?
Now that nintendogs + cats is done, I've been able to spend more time and energy on Mario Kart development. We really want to bring a bunch of new elements into the game, and I'm really looking forward to the time that I can announce what those new elements are. Perhaps we'll be able to talk more in detail at this year's E3 event.

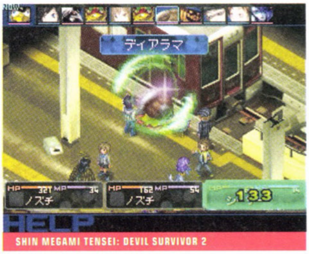
Is there anything you'd like to say to the early adopters of the Nintendo 3DS in North America?
Nintendo 3DS comes with a lot of unique built-in features and fun applications. What I'd like to tell the early adopters is that the system's not just for you. What we want you to do is show it to your friends, show it to your family, show them how much fun this is and sort of spread the joy. If you're having fun, let other people have fun with you. As I've said in my presentations many times, playing is believing, so I encourage all of the Nintendo 3DS purchasers to allow their friends and families and people around them to play the system so they can believe in it as well.



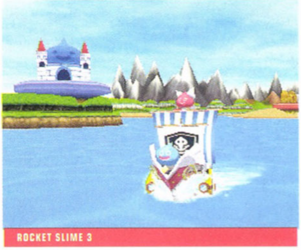
志島　大地

ラッキー、カギついてる！
…誰かいますかー！
トラック、借りちゃいますよ〜!?

SHIN MEGAMI TENSEI: DEVIL SURVIVOR 2



SHIN MEGAMI TENSEI: DEVIL SURVIVOR 2



ROCKET SLIME 3

Big News in All Dimensions

NEWS from JAPAN

This month in Japan: Cult-favorite series and a quirky new IP are on the way to the Nintendo 3DS, and there's still plenty happening on the original dual-screened handheld.

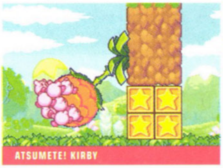
AS JAPAN slowly begins to recover from its devastating earthquake and nuclear crisis, game fans are reviewing the handful of new-game announcements that had slipped under the radar. On the Nintendo 3DS system, the biggest news is the announcement of a third game in the series known to North America as Dragon Quest Heroes: Rocket Slime. The previous Rocket Slime (the only one to be released in the West) mixed action-RPG segments reminiscent of The Legend of Zelda with dramatic battles in which the player manned the cannons of a giant customizable tank. This new installment features 3D graphics in both meanings of the word (the previous games used hand-drawn 2D sprites) and has a nautical theme, with ship-vs.-ship battles replacing the tank wars. It's scheduled to launch this winter in Japan, and we'll be heartbroken if a domestic release doesn't follow.

N3DS owners looking for a more traditional RPG experience will find one this August in Acquire's Class of Heroes 3D, a Wizardry-inspired 3D dungeon-crawler with a high-school motif. In addition to 3D visuals, Class of Heroes 3D offers the option to raise a "support pet" to aid you in combat, and the ability to pick up visiting heroes for your party via StreetPass. The first of the three Sony PSP Class of Heroes games was localized by Atlus; hopefully the company can be persuaded to revisit the series for its Nintendo-platform debut.

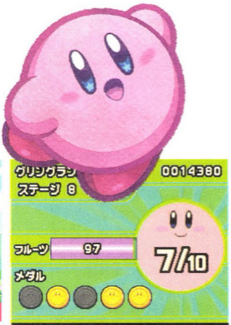
The last and strangest new N3DS announcement is Capcom's Nazo Waku Yakata, which translates to something like "Mysterious Mansion of Delusions." The game does, of course, feature 3D graphics, but its focus is actually on "3D" audio. A new technology known as otophonics (which you can sample at http://otophonics.com) promises to deliver full "3D" audio over even cheap headphones. Players will spend much of their time exploring the mansion by ear as they control their character with the Nintendo 3DS system's gyro sensor and microphone.

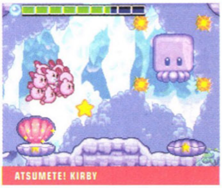
While the N3DS is hogging the spotlight, the original Nintendo DS still has a few cards left to play. Nintendo and HAL Laboratory have finally provided some details on the untitled Kirby game first announced last October, which is now titled Atsumete! Kirby ("Kirbys, Assemble!"). In the game's story, a villain seeks to neutralize Kirby by splitting him into 10 weaker Kirbys that he can destroy one by one. But one Kirby survived unharmed, and is on a quest to reassemble himself and exact justice. Players can use the stylus to control up to 10 Kirbys at once, using their combined strength to gang up on foes and solve puzzles in traditional side-scrolling action levels.

Atlus is also offering some 2D love in the form of a sequel to their Nintendo DS strategy-RPG Devil Survivor. (Which is also receiving a remake, Devil Survivor Overclocked, for the N3DS.) Devil Survivor 2 has been in development on the original Nintendo DS for over two years, and stars an all-new cast of 13 heroes who forge a pact with demons to fight off an alien invasion. —**CASEY L.**

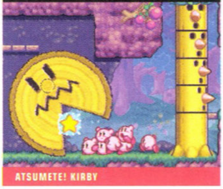


ATSUMETE! KIRBY



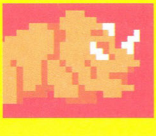


ATSUMETE! KIRBY



ATSUMETE! KIRBY

A WINNER IS...
Convention attendees with StreetPass enabled.



DODONGO DISLIKES...
The waiting game. The waiting game sucks.

Because the **Andersons** play video games, there's a system in place to make sure they **bring home the right ones.** This is how that system works: First, Mom and Dad select games using the ratings on the box. Step tw

everyone gets a controller. Step three, the **kids win.** This quality time is presented by the **ESRB.**

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

© 2006 ESRB. All rights reserved.

STAR POWER

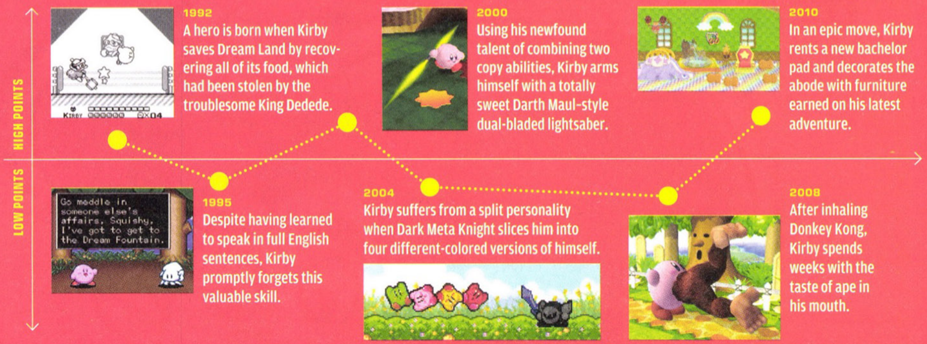
A closer look at the characters we love

Kirby

FIRST APPEARANCE:
KIRBY'S DREAM LAND
GAME BOY, 1992

He may look cute and innocent, but appearances can be deceiving. Fans know that Kirby is one tough puffball.

CAREER GRAPH



1992
A hero is born when Kirby saves Dream Land by recovering all of its food, which had been stolen by the troublesome King Dedede.

2000
Using his newfound talent of combining two copy abilities, Kirby arms himself with a totally sweet Darth Maul-style dual-bladed lightsaber.

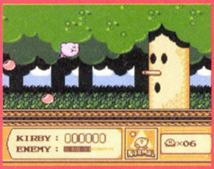
2010
In an epic move, Kirby rents a new bachelor pad and decorates the abode with furniture earned on his latest adventure.

1995
Despite having learned to speak in full English sentences, Kirby promptly forgets this valuable skill.

2004
Kirby suffers from a split personality when Dark Meta Knight slices him into four different-colored versions of himself.

2008
After inhaling Donkey Kong, Kirby spends weeks with the taste of ape in his mouth.

OUR FAVORITE KIRBY GAMES



Kirby's Adventure

NES, 1993

Kirby's Adventure marked not only the first time we saw the little fellow in color in a game, but also the first time he used his trademark copy ability.

100000
KIRBY

Kirby Super Star

SUPER NES, 1996

Talk about variety! This collection contains seven different platform games and two minigames. An updated version of this popular title (dubbed Kirby Super Star Ultra) was released on the DS in 2008.

Kirby: Canvas Curse

NINTENDO DS, 2005

Always the innovator, Kirby demonstrated just how much fun touch screen-controlled games could be with this unique platformer. The player guides Kirby by drawing rainbow paths along which the little guy travels.

Kirby's Epic Yarn

Wii, 2010

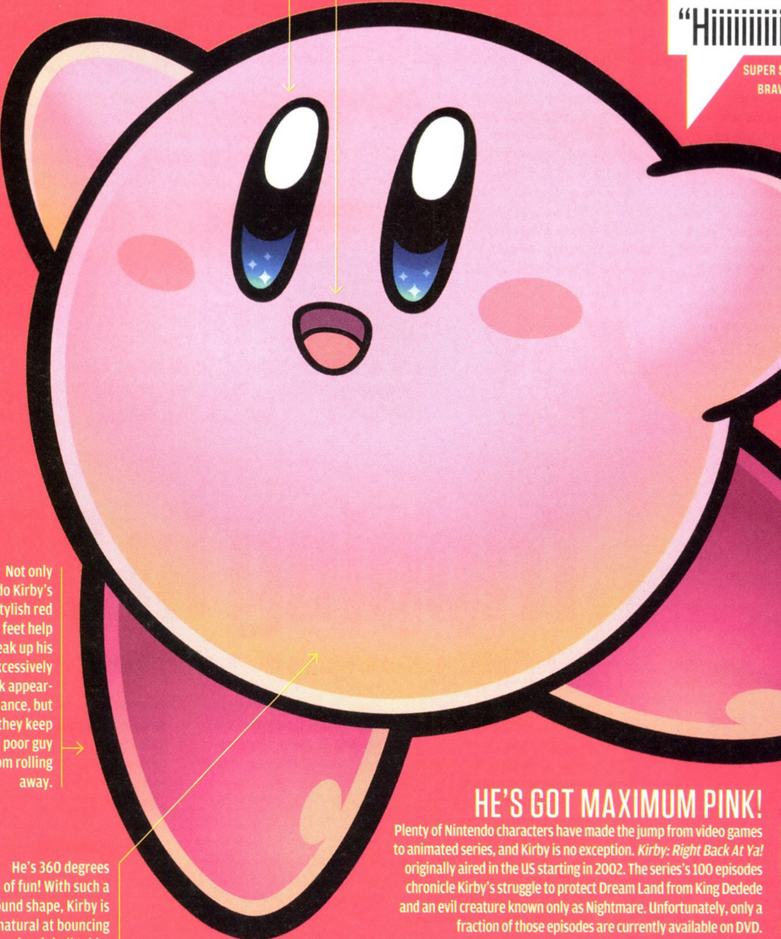
In Kirby's latest platformer, he's sucked into a magic sock. Inside, he discovers that he and the entire world are made of yarn and cloth. The unique (and adorable!) graphics and co-op multiplayer action give us a warm and fuzzy feeling whenever we play.

These big, friendly eyes let you know that Kirby is always in a happy mood. Well, almost always—he does have a tendency to put on his "angry eyes" when he appears on the cover of a video game.

This is what they call Kirby's "business end." It may be smiling now, but you don't want to get anywhere near this thing when it's in suction mode. You'll be pulled in and digested, and Kirby will be free to take advantage of all of your abilities.

"Hiiiiiiiiiiiiii!"

SUPER SMASH BROS.
BRAWL, Wii, 2008



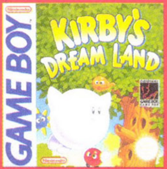
Not only do Kirby's stylish red feet help break up his excessively pink appearance, but they keep the poor guy from rolling away.

He's 360 degrees of fun! With such a round shape, Kirby is a natural at bouncing around a pinball table, breaking screens full of blocks, serving as an impromptu golf ball, or just doing some good ol' tilting 'n' tumbling. Kirby can also change shape when the need arises.

HE'S GOT MAXIMUM PINK!

Plenty of Nintendo characters have made the jump from video games to animated series, and Kirby is no exception. *Kirby: Right Back At Ya!* originally aired in the US starting in 2002. The series's 100 episodes chronicle Kirby's struggle to protect Dream Land from King Dedede and an evil creature known only as Nightmare. Unfortunately, only a fraction of those episodes are currently available on DVD.

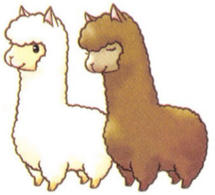
Kirby
Right Back At Ya!



GHOSTLY KIRBY

Thanks to Kirby's white coloring on the US box art of his first game, some people speculated that he was some sort of friendly spirit. That, of course, wasn't the case. At this year's Game Developers Conference, Nintendo president (and one of the original minds behind the Kirby series) Satoru Iwata revealed that Kirby was altered from his intended hue for fear that a soft, pink character wouldn't appeal to American players. Given Kirby's popularity after he donned his true colors, though, we don't think there was much to worry about. Even so, we're glad the game's title was changed from its original name: Tinkle Popo.

Bountiful Harvest

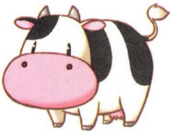


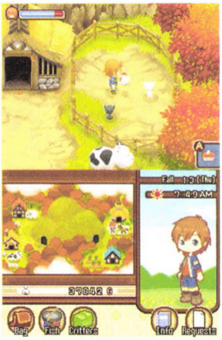
Harvest Moon: The Tale of Two Towns has taken root on both of Nintendo's handhelds.

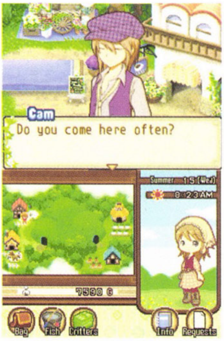
CONFLICT HAS COME to the once-peaceful world of Harvest Moon, as two rival towns take up knives, pitchforks, and colanders in a brutal war of culinary arts. Players can ally themselves with either the Asian-flavored farming town of Konohana or the European-styled ranching hamlet of Bluebell. Whatever your choice, you'll compete to raise the highest-quality ingredients, cook them into the tastiest dishes, and sew a bumper crop of humiliation in your rival town. Needless to say, players can also strive to build up their personal farming empires and woo and marry a spouse, but your primary goal is to reign supreme on the cooking-festival circuit and ultimately bring death and destruction to...er, no, wait; I guess the ultimate goal is actually to heal the rift between the towns and bring happiness and joy to all. Well, whatever.

Harvest Moon: The Tale of Two Towns for Nintendo DS and Harvest Moon 3D: The Tale of Two Towns for the N3DS are scheduled for a simultaneous launch this summer.

—CASEY L.







Cam

Do you come here often?

12 games! jeux/juegos
Wii
Wii Play Motion
Inside! À l'intérieur! ¡Incluido!
Nintendo

Mysteries and Motion from Nintendo

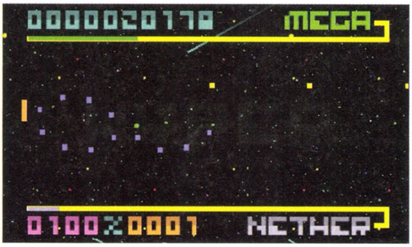
If you've been waiting for new first-party Wii games, you're in luck—Nintendo recently announced that it has two coming your way this June. Arriving on June 13 is Wii Play: Motion. This follow-up to the best-selling Wii Play includes 12 diverse activities and comes bundled with a black Wii Remote Plus controller. On June 27 the company will release Mystery Case Files: Dust to Dust, a hidden-object puzzle game with multiplayer functionality.

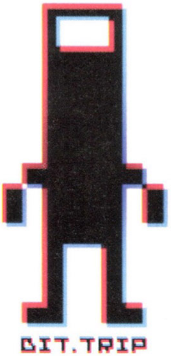
Tripping in 3D

The cult-hit Bit.Trip series makes the jump from WiiWare to Nintendo 3DS.

KNOWN FOR THEIR simple gameplay, retro-style visuals, pounding techno music, and heady themes, the Bit.Trip titles have garnered a significant following on WiiWare. But the downloadable space apparently isn't big enough to contain the six-part series, and neither are two dimensions: the full collection will be coming to Nintendo 3DS as a single retail product titled Bit.Trip Saga. The compilation follows protagonist CommanderVideo through six challenging chapters—Pong-style action games Bit.Trip Beat and Bit.Trip Flux, rhythmic shooters Bit.Trip Core and Bit.Trip Fate, platformer Bit.Trip Runner, and arcade-inspired Bit.Trip Void—each of which will be enhanced with stereoscopic 3D graphics. Many details (including how the games will control on the Nintendo 3DS system) are still being finalized as of press time, but publisher Aksys Games and developer Gaijin Games expect the title to hit this summer.

—CHRIS H.

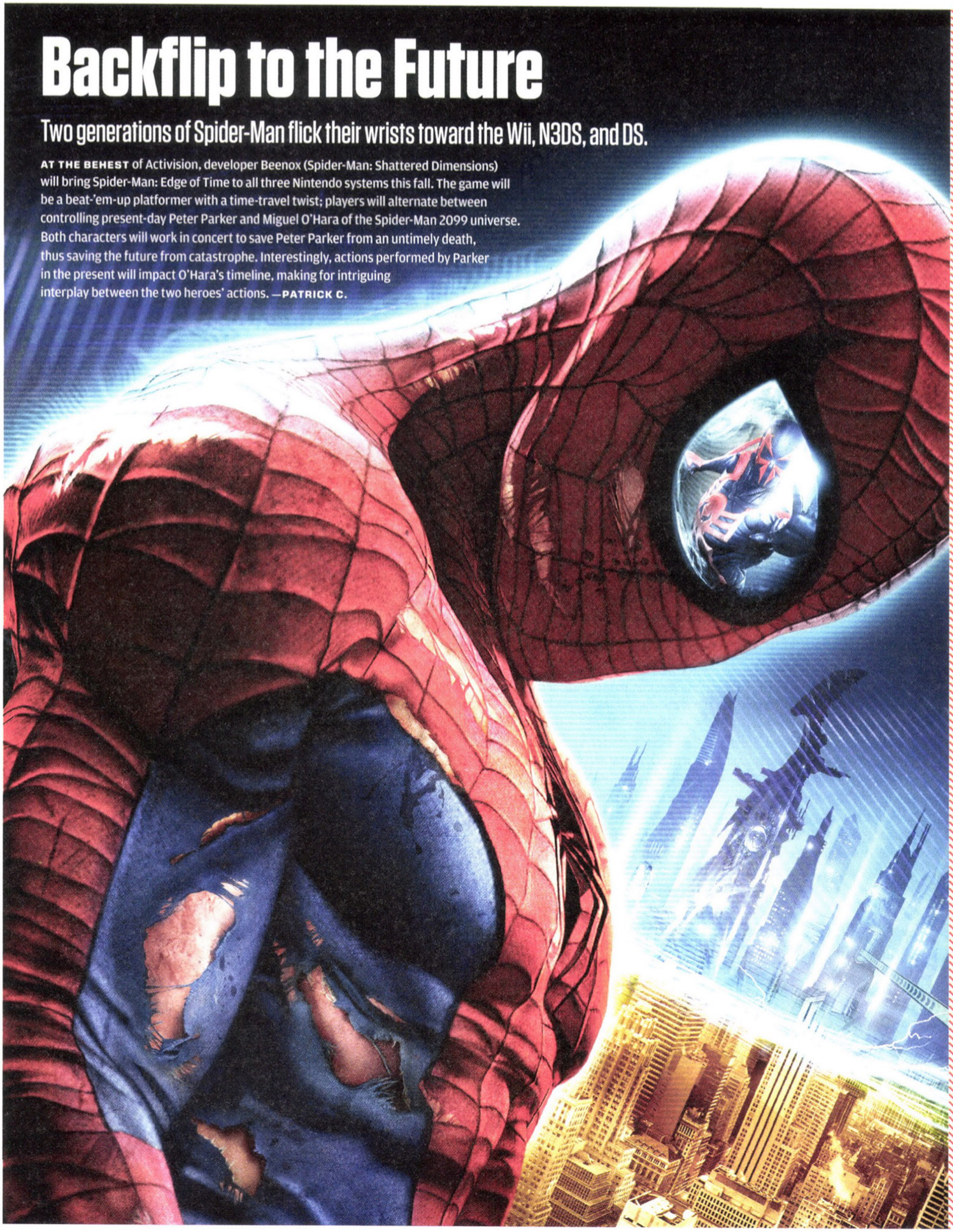


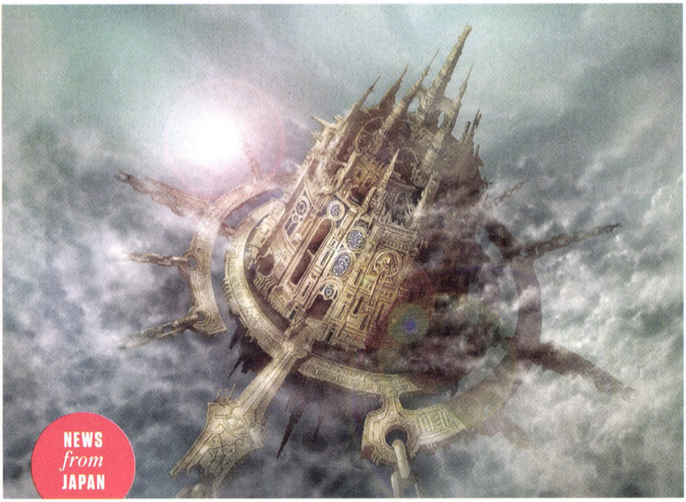


Backflip to the Future

Two generations of Spider-Man flick their wrists toward the Wii, N3DS, and DS.

AT THE BEHEST of Activision, developer Beenox (Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions) will bring Spider-Man: Edge of Time to all three Nintendo systems this fall. The game will be a beat-'em-up platformer with a time-travel twist; players will alternate between controlling present-day Peter Parker and Miguel O'Hara of the Spider-Man 2099 universe. Both characters will work in concert to save Peter Parker from an untimely death, thus saving the future from catastrophe. Interestingly, actions performed by Parker in the present will impact O'Hara's timeline, making for intriguing interplay between the two heroes' actions. —**PATRICK C.**





NEWS *from* JAPAN

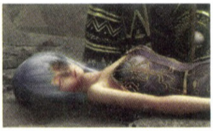
The Mark of the Beast

A cursed songstress quests for mystical meat in Pandora's Tower, Nintendo's newest offering for Japanese Wii owners.

BACK IN JANUARY, Nintendo published a teaser site for a game titled Pandora's Tower: Until You Return to My Side; the site featured little more than soft piano music and an image of what appeared to be a tattoo on a woman's back. But now the company has finally opened the doors of Pandora's Tower, giving us our first look at an intriguing new action-RPG with a strong flavor of Greek mythology.

The woman in the teaser campaign is a young priestess named Seres, who has been chosen to sing the ceremonial song at her city's annual harvest festival. But as she surveys the crowd from the stage, everything goes horribly wrong: the mysterious tattoolike seal appears on her back and the festival degenerates into bedlam as violent beasts run wild through the festival grounds. For reasons unknown to her, Seres has become the target of a bestial curse that will cause no end of chaos around her while also bringing her own life to an early, painful end.

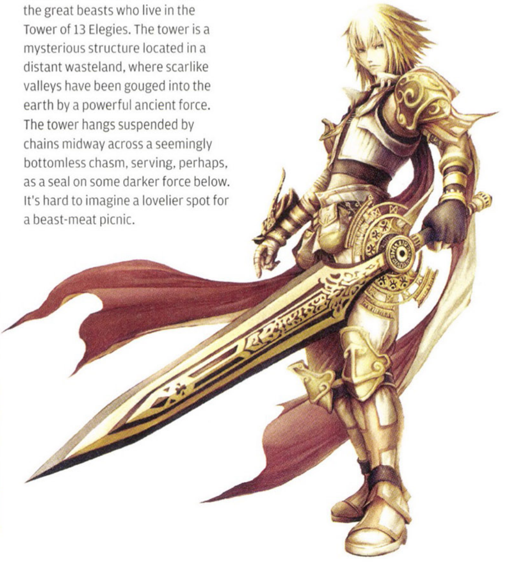
There's only one cure (of course), and that's to feed her the meat of the great beasts who live in the Tower of 13 Elegies. The tower is a mysterious structure located in a distant wasteland, where scarlike valleys have been gouged into the earth by a powerful ancient force. The tower hangs suspended by chains midway across a seemingly bottomless chasm, serving, perhaps, as a seal on some darker force below. It's hard to imagine a lovelier spot for a beast-meat picnic.

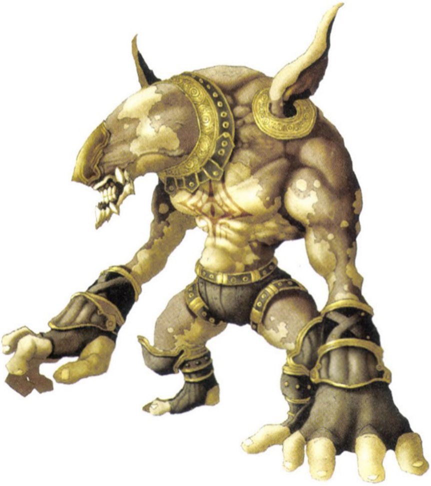


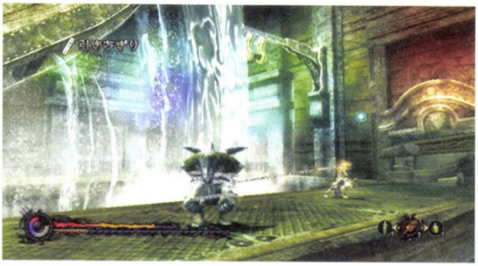
While Seres withers away outside, hero Ende (a wounded soldier who Seres had previously found and nursed back to health) assaults each of the tower's 12 outer spires, seeking the meat of the great beasts within. And he'll need to be right quick about it, because Seres's curse worsens in real time (a bar in the corner of the screen tracks her condition), and she will perish unless Ende returns to her frequently with meat or other items that can keep it under control.

Pandora's Tower features a perspective and visual style reminiscent of recent games in the

[Above] Cool-looking cinema scenes complement the game's story line.







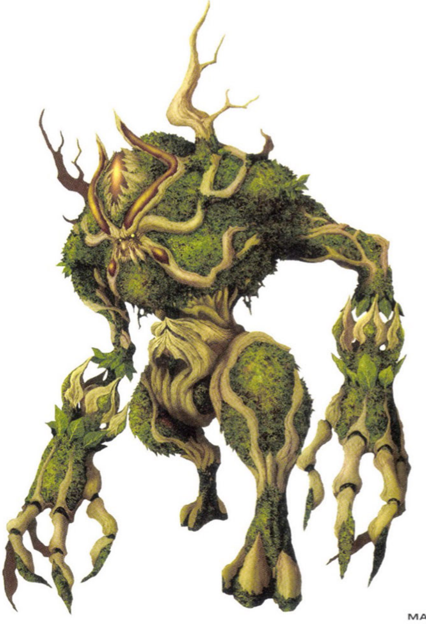
[Above] Etre's chain is controlled primarily through Wii Remote motions. Now that he's ensnared a foe, yank the controller back to send the poor chump flying.

Ys series, with a setting that seems structured similarly to Castlevania's giant castles. (I'm trademarking the term "Yslvania" now—let's hope it sticks!) The camera positioning shifts from scene to scene, giving a bird's-eye view in large central areas while offering a side view in tunnels and narrower spaces that make Pandora's Tower look and play like a side-scrolling platformer at times. Other sections of the game offer a behind-the-back perspective for more-dramatic exploration scenes. Not much is known about the game's RPG elements at this point, but Ende will have access to an inventory full of items (some of which are upgradeable as the game progresses), and the existence of raw materials suggests some sort of item-crafting mechanic.

Ende wields a massive sword, but our introduction to the game's combat focused on the mechanics of a different weapon—a length of magical orichalcum chain that plays a role in a variety of game mechanics. In addition to helping Ende solve some of the game's puzzles, the chain can be used to grab distant items, trip up foes, or entangle fallen enemies and swing their bodies around like a wrecking ball before launching them at other foes.

When Pandora's Tower was first revealed, many people assumed Xenoblade developer Monolith Soft was at the helm. But the game is actually a collaboration between Nintendo and Ganbarion, developer of the licensed One Piece games (including 2008's One Piece: Unlimited Adventure on Wii) and the never-localized but well-regarded Jump Super Stars on the DS. Obviously, Pandora's Tower is a major departure for the developer, but our early peek at the game was quite promising. Lets hope Ganbarion's risk is rewarded with the Western release this ambitious game surely deserves. **—CASEY L.**

[Above] Seres ponders a fetid chunk of monster meat. Hope she brought a spice rack.



POWER QUIZ

EASY

From what country does Street Fighter warrior Blanka hail?

AVERAGE

In what Street Fighter game did the energetic Sakura make her first appearance?

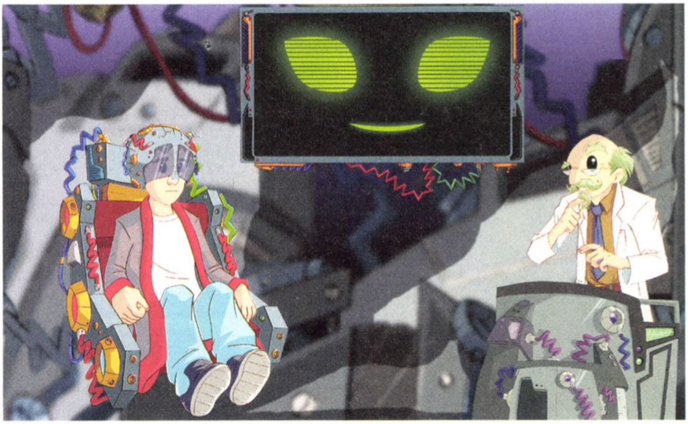
HARDCORE

What three characters were missing from the Game Boy version of Street Fighter II?

Nintendo
STREET FIGHTER II
GAME BOY

ANSWERS

EASY: Brazil; AVERAGE: Street Fighter Alpha 2; HARDCORE: E. Honda, Dhalsim, and Vega



Got a Crush?

Sega's inventive puzzler, **Crush 3D** for Nintendo 3DS, lets you flatten and expand worlds on command.

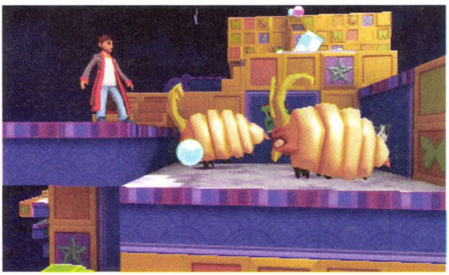
CRUSH ORIGINALLY saw release on Sony's PSP hardware in 2007, but while the innovative platform-puzzle game won rave reviews and a fervent following, it never quite found the sales to match. Luckily, Sega and developer Zoë Mode saw fit to give the game a second life on the Nintendo 3DS system, and the newly christened Crush 3D plans to shake up the look and tone of the original release while taking full advantage of the system's unique features.

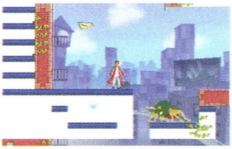
In Crush 3D you'll control Danny, a young kid who agrees to take part in experiments performed by the friendly Dr. Doc Doccerson. As a result, Danny is able to dig through his subconscious to explore memories, which you'll navigate by moving from one point to the next in each level.

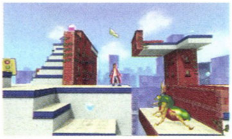
However, getting to the next stage is the tricky part, as Crush 3D's complicated-looking level layouts must be traversed by moving the camera around the 3D version of the world and then "crushing" it into a 2D plane. It's not entirely unlike the mechanic in Super Paper Mario for the Wii console, but the introduction of different types of blocks in the world—which may sport very distinct properties in the 2D and 3D versions of the stage—adds to the unique flavor of the experience.

Crush 3D is much more than a straight port of the PSP title, something that's particularly evident in these screenshots, which show off the brighter, updated look. As a result, the game not only packs a more vibrant visual pop—with the 3D effect sure to ratchet up the sensation—but the Nintendo 3DS version also better differentiates the block types for less confusion. Also included are new challenges for advanced players and better hints for newcomers, as well as a lighter tone to the storyline that, thankfully, doesn't shed the game's very British sense of humor.

Plus, the Nintendo 3DS version introduces an exciting new StreetPass function in which you can place gifts in stages in devious locations, and then have the recipient crush and uncrush his way through the stage to obtain it. Paired with the many other alterations, Crush 3D really seems like an entirely new experience for Nintendo 3DS owners—albeit one based on an excellent existing concept. —**ANDREW H.**



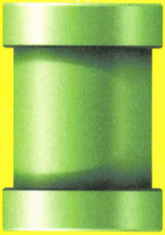




WARP ZONE

What we were writing about way back when

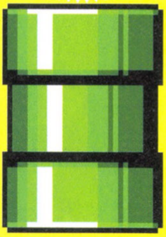
5 YEARS AGO



The Bros. Are Back

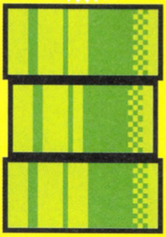
After exploring immersive polygonal worlds for several years, in May 2006 Mario returned to his 2D side-scrolling roots in New Super Mario Bros. for the DS, and Nintendo Power was there to spill all the juicy details. In addition to an exclusive hands-on preview of the game, this issue's cover story included a fact-filled Mario timeline. Unfortunately, our crystal ball was broken and we incorrectly guessed that Mario would be elected president in 2008. Our bad.

10 YEARS AGO



What's better than a cover story about a new Zelda game? A cover story about two new Zelda games. That's what fans were treated to in May 2001 thanks to the impending releases of The Legend of Zelda: Oracle of Ages and The Legend of Zelda: Oracle of Seasons for Game Boy Color. Zelda also ruled the 2000 Nintendo Power Awards—The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask claimed the prize in several categories, including Best Overall Game.

20 YEARS AGO



NINTENDO POWER
VICE: PROJECT DOOM
Don't Miss!
Bonus!

The May 1991 issue of Nintendo Power continued the trend of devoting bizarre covers to obscure NES games—this time using a huge pair of binoculars to represent Vice: Project Doom. The issue also contained the 1990 Nintendo Power Awards winners (top honors went to Super Mario Bros. 3 for NES and TMNT for Game Boy) and some truly terrifying art from the Game Boy version of Gauntlet II.

Virtually Unlimited Entertainment
SOLITAIRE OVERLOAD PLUS
101 Mahjong
202 Solitaire
303 Tangram
101 Picture Puzzles
ALMOST UNLIMITED PLAY!
ULTIMATE PUZZLE GAMES Sudoku Edition
Unlimited puzzles!
SOLITAIRE OVERLOAD
101 GAMES
FreeCell • Klondike • Golf
Pyramid • Yukon • Spider
...and 95 more games!
NOW available for iPad
All Games Designed with VUE™ Technology
AVAILABLE AT
BEST BUY
GameStop
amazon.com
TARGET
TELEGAMES®
Web site: www.telegames.com

COLLECTOR'S CORNER

SERIOUSLY COOL STUFF FOR SERIOUS NINTENDO FANS

Huggably Heroic

Who needs a teddy bear when you can get these adorable plush renditions of Mario, Luigi, and Yoshi by Goldie? Be sure to give Luigi an extra hug. He needs it.

Rev It Up

These pull-back Mario Kart racers from Tomy are randomly packed, but you're guaranteed to get something good. The set also includes Mario (kart and bike versions), Luigi (kart), Princess Peach (kart), and Yoshi (kart).

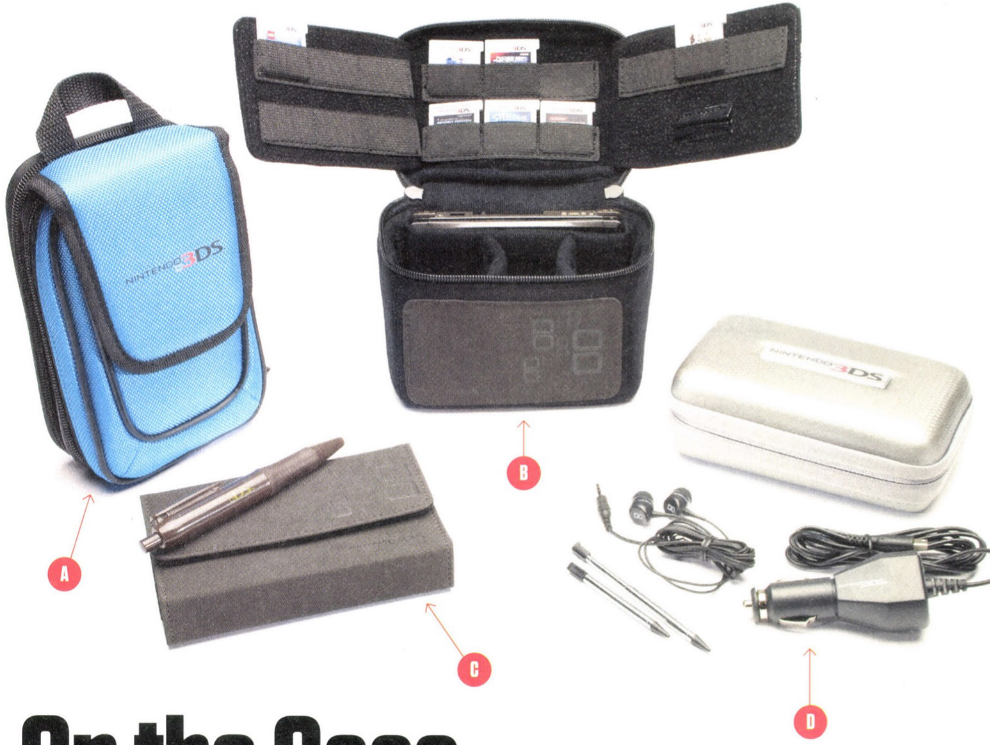
PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK MADEO

HELLO
my name is
Chris

MATURE 17+
M
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

This is Chris, hardcore gamer. He's been playing games ever since he could grip a controller. When he was growing up, **his parents used the ESRB rating**

to choose the games that were right for him. One day he'll use the ratings to **decide what games his kids play** — he just doesn't know it yet.



On the Case

After rigorous testing, we've selected the best officially licensed carrying cases for the Nintendo 3DS.

[A] Mini Elite Transporter Case

MANUFACTURER: POWER A

MSRP: $16.99

You can pack a lot of stuff into this relatively compact case, which comes in both blue and black. The front compartment holds your Nintendo 3DS system and houses little notches for styli of various sizes, while the rear compartment has pouches for 12 N3DS games. There's also a large pouch just under the flap, where you could store additional games. Our only gripe with the Mini Elite Transporter Case is that removing the system is a slightly cumbersome, three-step process.

[B] Traveler Bag

MANUFACTURER: MAD CATZ

MSRP: $19.99

The Traveler Bag is a bit less portable than the other cases on this page, but it comes with lots of storage space. When opened, the lid reveals two foldout flaps with pouches for a whopping 21 game cards and notches for a pair of styli. Meanwhile, the bag itself offers a snug fit for your N3DS system, as well as three additional compartments for accessories such as an AC adapter or headphones.

[C] Microsuede Touch Pak

MANUFACTURER: MAD CATZ

MSRP: $14.99

This is probably our favorite of the N3DS cases we've sampled thus far. What it lacks in storage space—there's room for only your system and three games—it makes up for with a discreet, stylish design and microsuede exterior. The Touch Pak also comes with a Jumbo Click Stylus, but you can purchase the wallet on its own for $12.99. That would be our recommendation unless you have giant hands that necessitate an equally gargantuan stylus.

[D] Explorer Starter Kit

MANUFACTURER: POWER A

MSRP: $29.99

The Explorer Starter Kit comes with a full suite of N3DS accessories: a protective case (either black or silver), ear buds, a car adapter, two retractable styli, a cleaning cloth, and two screen protectors. The hardshell case is perfect for those with butterfingers, and despite its diminutive size, can hold everything included in this package. A divider separates your system from the accessories and is lined with pouches for three games. —**STEVE T.**

GAME FORECAST

Wii

Captain America: Super Soldier	Sega	7/11
Cars 2: The Video Game	Disney	SUM 11
Cartoon Network Punch Time Explosion	Crave	HOL 11
Centipede: Infestation	Atari	FALL 11
Driver San Francisco	Ubisoft	2011
Green Lantern: Rise of the Manhunters	Warner Bros.	6/11

The Grinder	TBA	TBA
Hard Grip: The Climbing Game	TBA	TBA
Jimmie Johnson's Anything with an Engine	Autumn	2011
Kung Fu Panda 2	THQ	5/11
The Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword	Nintendo	2011
Mystery Case Files: Dust to Dust	Nintendo	6/11
NCIS	Ubisoft	2011
Phineas and Ferb: Across the 2nd Dimension	Disney	SUM 11
Pyroblazer	TBA	TBA
Rock of the Dead	Conspiracy	2011
Sky Pirates of Neo Terra	Aspyr	TBA
Skylanders: Spyro's Adventure	Activision	Q3 11
The Smurfs	Ubisoft	8/11
Spider-Man: Edge of Time	Activision	FALL 11
Stratusphere	TBA	TBA
Transformers: Dark of the Moon Stealth Force Edition	Activision	6/11
UFC Personal Trainer	THQ	6/11
Wii Play: Motion	Nintendo	6/11
X-Men: Destiny	Activision	2011

NINTENDO DS

Captain America: Super Soldier	Sega	7/11
Cars 2: The Video Game	Disney	SUM 11
Doodle Hex	TBA	TBA
Duke Nukem: Critical Mass	Deep Silver	Q2 11
Ghostwire: Link to the Paranormal	TBA	TBA
Green Lantern: Rise of the Manhunters	Warner Bros.	6/11
Harvest Moon: The Tale of Two Towns	Natsume	2011
Hollywood Files	Easy	6/11
Kung Fu Panda 2	THQ	5/11
NCIS	Ubisoft	2011
Pirate Battle	Orbital Media	TBA
Phineas and Ferb: Across the 2nd Dimension	Disney	SUM 11
The Smurfs	Ubisoft	8/11
Spider-Man: Edge of Time	Activision	FALL 11
Transformers: Dark of the Moon—Autobots	Activision	6/11
Transformers: Dark of the Moon—Decepticons	Activision	6/11
X-Men: Destiny	Activision	2011

NINTENDO 3DS

Animal Crossing*	Nintendo	TBA
Assassin's Creed: Lost Legacy	Ubisoft	TBA
Baseball*	Konami	TBA
Batman*	Warner Bros.	TBA
Bit.Trip Saga	Aksys	TBA
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift 2	Aksys	SPR 11
BloodRayne: The Shroud	Majesco	TBA
Bokujyoumonogatari 3D*	Marvelous	TBA
A Boy and His Blob	Majesco	TBA
Brunswick Pro Bowling	Crave	TBA
Captain America: Super Soldier	Sega	TBA
Carnival Games*	Take-Two	TBA
Cave Story 3D	NIS America	SUM 11
Centipede: Infestation	Atari	FALL 11
Chocobo Racing 3D*	Square Enix	TBA
Contra*	Konami	TBA
Crash-City GP	Rocket	TBA
Crush 3D	Sega	2011
Cubic Ninja	Ubisoft	6/11
de Blob 2	THQ	TBA
DJ Hero 3D	Activision	TBA
Dr. Lautrec and the Forgotten Knights	Konami	SUM 11
Dragon Ball*	Namco Bandai	TBA
Dragon Quest*	Square Enix	TBA
Dream Trigger 3D	D3Publisher	SPR 11
Driver Renegade	Ubisoft	Q2 11
Dual Pen Sports	Namco Bandai	2011
Dynasty Warriors*	Tecmo Koei	TBA
Etrian Odyssey*	Atlus	TBA
Face Kart: Photo Finish	Majesco	2011
FIFA Soccer*	Electronic Arts	TBA
Final Fantasy*	Square Enix	TBA
Frogger*	Konami	TBA
Gabrielle's Ghostly Groove 3D	Natsume	SUM 11
Green Lantern: Rise of the Manhunters	Warner Bros.	6/11
Gundam*	Namco Bandai	TBA
Harvest Moon: The Tale of Two Towns	Natsume	2011
The Hidden	Majesco	10/11
James Noir's Hollywood Crimes	Ubisoft	6/11
Kid Icarus: Uprising	Nintendo	2011
Kingdom Hearts: Dream Drop Distance	Square Enix	TBA
Kung Fu Panda: Kaboom of Doom	THQ	TBA
The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time 3D	Nintendo	6/11
Lion's Pride: Adventures in the Serengeti	Majesco	TBA
Lovely Lisa 3D	Tomy	TBA
Mario Kart*	Nintendo	TBA
Martha Stewart	Majesco	TBA
Marvel Super Hero Squad: The Infinity Gauntlet	THQ	SUM 11
Mega Man Legends 3	Capcom	TBA
Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater	Konami	TBA
Naruto Shippuden Action*	Tomy	TBA
Ninja Gaiden*	Tecmo Koei	TBA
Pac-Man & Galaga Dimensions	Namco Bandai	SUM 11
Paper Mario*	Nintendo	TBA
The Penguins of Madagascar	THQ	TBA
Pet Zombies in 3D	Majesco	2011
Petz Fantasy 3D	Ubisoft	6/11
Pinball Hall of Fame: The Williams Collection	Crave	TBA
Professor Layton and the Mask of Miracle*	Level-5	TBA
Puss N Boots	THQ	TBA
Reel Fishing Paradise 3D	Natsume	6/11
Resident Evil: The Mercenaries 3D	Capcom	6/11
Resident Evil: Revelations	Capcom	TBA
Saints Row: Drive-By	THQ	TBA
Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Survivor Overclocked	Atlus	2011
Shin Megami Tensei: Persona*	Atlus	TBA
Sonic*	Sega	TBA
Spider-Man: Edge of Time	Activision	FALL 11
Star Fox 64 3D	Nintendo	2011
Super Mario*	Nintendo	TBA
Super Robot*	Namco Bandai	TBA
Tales of the Abyss	Namco Bandai	FALL 11

Thor: God of Thunder	Sega	TBA
Transformers: Dark of the Moon Stealth Force Edition 3D	Activision	6/11
VS-robo	Rocket	TBA
WonderWorld Amusement Park	Majesco	TBA
Zoo Mania	Ubisoft	6/11

READERS' MOST WANTED

Vote for your favorites at www.nintendopower.com/polls

Wii

1. The Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword
2. Spider-Man: Edge of Time
3. Transformers: Dark of the Moon
4. Captain America: Super Soldier
5. Phineas and Ferb: Across the 2nd Dimension

NINTENDO DS

1. Harvest Moon: The Tale of Two Towns
2. Duke Nukem: Critical Mass
3. Phineas and Ferb: Across the 2nd Dimension
4. Thor: God of Thunder
5. Spider-Man: Edge of Time

NINTENDO 3DS

1. Mario Kart*
2. Super Mario*
3. Paper Mario*
4. The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time 3D
5. Kid Icarus: Uprising

RED TEXT = TITLES ADDED THIS MONTH. * TENTATIVE TITLE **NOTE:** RELEASE DATES OFTEN CHANGE.

DOWNLOAD

IN THIS SECTION

WIIWARE PREVIEW
BurgerTime

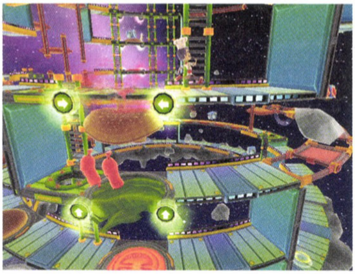
WIIWARE PREVIEW
FAST Racing League

DSIWARE PREVIEW
Dreamwalker

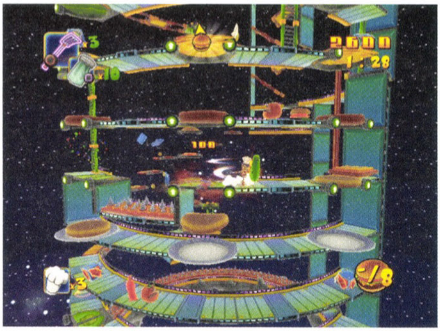
WIIWARE REVIEWS
ARCADE ESSENTIALS
HEAVY FIRE: BLACK ARMS
LIIGHT
PLANET FISH

VIRTUAL CONSOLE REVIEWS
BOMBERMAN HERO
NATSUME CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING
SUPER BONK

DSIWARE REVIEWS
5 IN 1 MAHJONG
ABSOLUTE BASEBALL
ANONYMOUS NOTES CHAPTER 1: FROM THE ABYSS
A FAIRY TALE
G.G SERIES D-TANK
G.G SERIES HORIZONTAL BAR
GO SERIES EARTH SAVER
JELLYCAR 2
PLANTS VS. ZOMBIES
RABI LABY
SHAPO
SIMPLY SOLITAIRE



[Above] If you're being chased by sausages, there's only one thing to do: crush them with a giant hamburger bun.



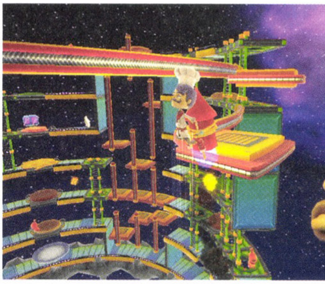
Here's the Beef

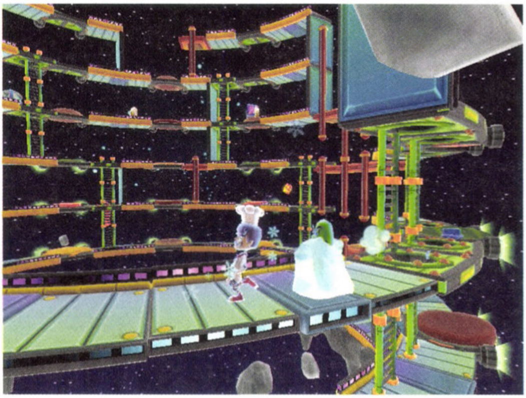
Arcade classic BurgerTime is back—with a modern facelift—on WiiWare.

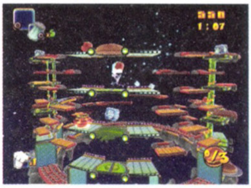
WHO'S THE TRUE Iron Chef? It's not those guys on Food Network. If anyone's deserving of the title, it's Chef Peter Pepper, the star of the classic video game BurgerTime. Sure, other guys can make good food, but only Chef Pepper can make delicious, mouthwatering, man-sized hamburgers while being chased by lethal rampaging foodstuffs. Though Chef Pepper got his start more than 25 years ago in arcades, this culinary icon hasn't lost a step over the years, and he's preparing to make a comeback with a BurgerTime remake on WiiWare.

"BurgerTime has a history as being one of the great classic arcade games and it's never been remade," states John Greiner, president of publisher MonkeyPaw Games. "The title has a strong following. We knew the power of BurgerTime when I ran Hudson Entertainment. It was our most popular mobile game, bigger than Bomberman and Bonk. However, the game needed to evolve in order to bridge new users with retro fans."

At the most basic level, BurgerTime's gameplay remains the same. Controlling Chef Pepper, you must walk across oversized hamburger ingredients (buns, patties, cheese, lettuce, tomatoes, etc.) so they'll fall to the platform below, eventually stacking up into a tasty burger. When you've completed every burger on a level—and avoided the dastardly sausages, pickles, and eggs that are out to stop you—your task is complete and you're ready to tackle the next stage. But the WiiWare version of BurgerTime boasts loads of added elements—new obstacles (moving





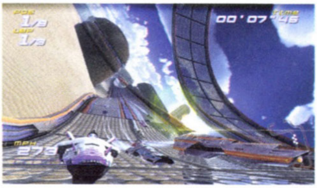


platforms and lethal spikes, for example), new enemies (including stinky cheese, carrots, and habanero chilies), new power-ups (such as a spatula and a rocket pack), new abilities (unlike in the original BurgerTime, you can jump), and a cylindrical, rotating playfield instead of a flat 2D plane.

"The key was to remake the title from the ground up," explains Greiner. "We considered all the classic elements that had to stay in the game and then we threw the rest open to creative brainstorming. We came up with a 3D look based on a cylindrical form where we give the game an endless platform. And we've added so many new features that the game is now retro in name alone."

As was common in arcade games of yore, BurgerTime doesn't have much of a story—apparently Chef Pepper is visiting cities such as New York, Paris, and Tokyo to prove his cooking superiority—but it does offer plenty of ways to rack up a high score. One of the most satisfying aspects of the original BurgerTime was crushing pursuing enemies with falling ingredients, and the same is true in this version, only now you earn bonuses for squashing certain combinations of foes. Flattening stinky cheese and a sausage in your burger, for example, yields an Italiano Burger; an egg, a pickle, and a sausage result in an All-American Burger; and a habanero, a carrot, and a pickle add up to a Garden Burger. And though most of the game's 20 stages are based on the classic premise of running through a mazelike level while outsmarting your pursuers, some stages forgo enemies and focus on pure platforming, while others feature encounters against giant bosses (presumably, they're vegetarian).

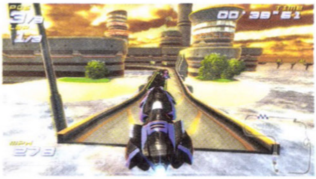
Developed by Frozen Codebase, BurgerTime should be out on WiiWare this summer. —**CHRIS H.**



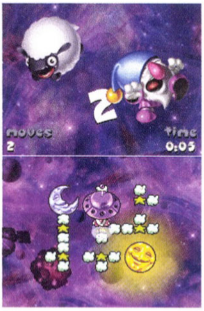
At the Speed of Light...and Dark

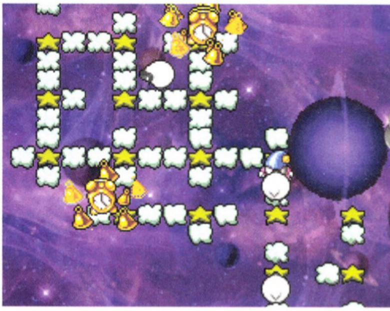
WiiWare title FAST Racing League adds a new twist to futuristic competition.

IT'S ONE THING to hear about the ability to shift between two phases in WiiWare racer FAST Racing League, but it's another to actually experience it in action. We recently had the chance to go hands-on with FAST, the latest game from Jett Rocket developer Shin'en, and to say we're impressed is an understatement. Based on its content alone (12 main courses, 21 challenge tracks, 3 difficulty settings, 4-player action, multiple control schemes), FAST seems to deliver, but what separates it from other racing games is that you can switch your vehicle from "light phase" to "dark phase" with the push of a button. When in light phase, you can use jump pads, boost strips, and magnetic ceilings that you can't use in dark phase, and vice versa. The first layer of strategy is obvious—you want to change phases to take advantage of every benefit possible—but since phase-shifting depletes the same gauge you use for nitro boosts, you'll have to plan accordingly and make sure you replenish the gauge by picking up as many energy orbs as possible. Racing full-throttle isn't enough; you'll also have to race smart. If you're ready for a different kind of racer, start revving up your engine; the game should hit the Wii Shop Channel in the very near future. —**CHRIS H.**



POS
5/5
LAP
1/3
TIME
00'24"25
MPH
200
Boost available!





Dream a Little Dream

Enter a world of sleep and nightmares in Dreamwalker for DSiWare.

SOMETIMES THERE'S NOTHING a guy wants more than a good night's rest. Just ask Walker, the star of upcoming DSiWare game Dreamwalker. Actually, he wouldn't answer—he's asleep. As the bearded Walker (not to be confused with a certain Texas Ranger) blissfully sleepwalks the night away, it's up to you to keep him on the right path and safe from harmful beings who threaten to disrupt his peaceful slumber.

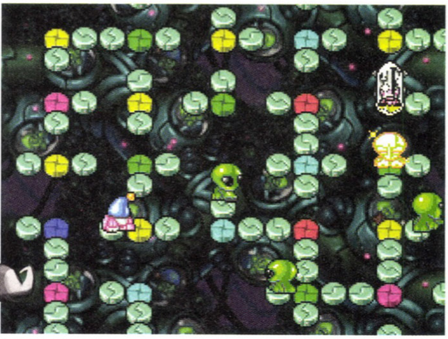
The first original title from developer/publisher Code Mystics, Dreamwalker is an action-puzzle game designed to appeal to a broad audience. The core play mechanic—using the touch screen to rotate platforms so the automatically moving Walker can make it to the exit of each stage—is pretty simple to grasp. "I wanted our first original game on our engine to be something that would grab long-term gamers and newcomers both," says game designer/producer Jeff Vavasour.

New concepts, however, are introduced at a rapid pace to keep the gameplay from getting stale. You'll quickly encounter numerous sleep-themed enemies you'll need to avoid, such as mobile alarm clocks that will ring if Walker gets too close, an "early bird" that threatens to wake Walker up as it attempts to catch a worm, and the Night Mare (an evil horse that can randomly rotate platforms). You'll also face elements such as sheep that you can collect and count to earn bonus points, linked platforms that rotate simultaneously, teleporters that warp you around the level, and rain-cloud platforms that disappear after you've stepped on them.

"One of the design goals I adamantly wanted for this game was for it to feel fresh even after hours of play," explains Vavasour, "so not only does the gameplay evolve, but the soundtrack becomes deeper and richer through the levels. There are even subtle changes to incidental art from level to level, and even some calendar-inspired changes."

In addition to conquering the game's 40 stages, dedicated players can attempt to earn awards by beating stages within time limits or using only a certain number of moves. Plus, you'll have opportunities on many levels to encounter cows that allow you to reach alien-themed bonus areas. "What takes you away in the middle of your sleep but doesn't wake you?" Vavasour inquires. "Alien abductions, of course. And aliens raid cow pastures in the middle of the night, because that's just what they do." In these survival-style stages, Walker meanders through an alien ship, freeing imprisoned heifers and avoiding aliens until they inevitably catch him and send him back to Dreamland.

Though Dreamwalker isn't the first action-puzzler available for DSiWare, its unique themes and layered gameplay promise to make it one of the most intriguing. The game, priced at 500 points, should be available in the Nintendo DSi Shop soon (if it isn't available already). —**CHRIS H.**



“★★★★★”

Amazing app, and it's FREE!

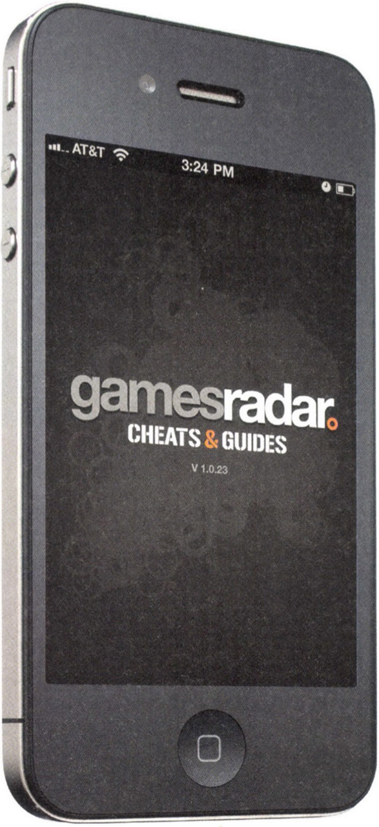
by Vitsnuklz

“★★★★★ **THE BEST GUIDES** on the internet… **ALL IN ONE PLACE**”

by Samael76

“★★★★★ Thank you GamesRadar for **FEEDING MY ADDICTION**”

by Poconoscott



“★★★★★ GamesRadar is **FULL OF WIN**”

by Marcello Almaguer

“★★★★★ **AWESOMESAUCE!** Great app. I love!”

by June Martin

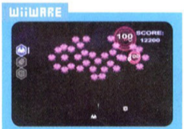
Think guidebooks are too heavy? Is your computer too far away from your console? Do you hate standing up? If so, download our gift to couch potatoes!

gamesradar. www.gamesradar.com

www.futureus.com Future MEDIA WITH PASSION

EVALUATION STATION

WIIWARE



ARCADE ESSENTIALS

PUBLISHER: **NORDCURRENT**
GENRE: **ACTION**
Wii POINTS: **500**

Arcade Essentials offers five homages to (or ripoffs of) arcade-era classics; Interceptor apes Galaga, Terra Conqueror updates Qix, Colors Cells duplicates Bust-A-Move, Troops Attack is a riff on Missile Command, and Hexagonum mimics Q*Bert. Two problems plague the batch: first, the reskinned, unlicensed copies can't offer the nostalgic jolt this sort of thing requires. Second, the implementations are third-rate, which keeps them from standing on their own. —PATRICK C.

Grumble Grumble

WIIWARE

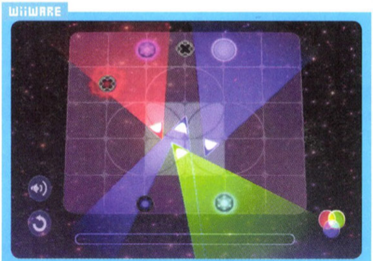
HEAVY FIRE: BLACK ARMS

PUBLISHER: **TEYON**
GENRE: **SHOOTER**
Wii POINTS: **500**

The follow-up to Heavy Fire: Special Operations (released for WiiWare last year), Heavy Fire: Black Arms varies little from its predecessor. The levels are different, the enemy placement is different, but the straightforward, light-gun-style shooting hasn't changed a bit. That's OK, though; not only is the action relentless, but co-op is a blast and the graphics are among the best on WiiWare. I do wish the difficulty were a bit more consistent, however. —CHRIS H.

Recommended

WIIWARE



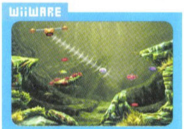
LIIGHT

PUBLISHER: **STUDIO WALLJUMP** GENRE: **PUZZLE** Wii POINTS: **500**

Liight—a clever puzzle game in which you place colored lights to illuminate like-colored icons—has been a long time coming, and for the most part the result is worth the wait. Though the premise and interface are simple, the difficulty ramps up nicely, and some of the later levels will give you a mental workout thanks to elements such as multihued lights and rotatable platforms. The price is nice, too; for $5 you get 100 levels, plus the ability to create and share custom stages. Unfortunately, you'll have to deal with some problematic controls when you're trying to move lights that are close together. Even when my cursor was right on top of one light, I sometimes wound up moving or twisting a different light that was nearby. —CHRIS H.

Recommended

WIIWARE



PLANET FISH

PUBLISHER: **LUDIA**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
Wii POINTS: **500**

Planet Fish is an odd mix between a puzzle game and an aquarium sim. You move your submarine by pointing the Wii Remote, but the challenge lies in carefully shooting your bubble gun and tractor beam to trap and then abduct different types of fish for your aquarium. Capturing the rarer fish is satisfying, but your bubble gun is terribly unreliable. The direction indicator uncontrollably swings to and fro like a pendulum, making some puzzles more frustrating than fun. —CODY M.

Hmmm...

VIRTUAL CONSOLE

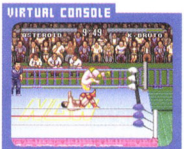
BOMBERMAN HERO

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO 64**
PUBLISHER: **HUDSON/NINTENDO**
GENRE: **PLATFORMER**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1998**

The biggest hurdle in enjoying Bomberman Hero is getting over the fact that it's a Bomberman game with no multiplayer aspect. But this 3D platformer contains a wide variety of levels, multiple power-ups, secret worlds to discover, and even some vehicle stages to add variety. The 3D view makes aiming and jumping tricky at times, but you'll adapt. Sure, this game may not reach Super Mario 64's lofty heights, but it's still quite enjoyable. —PHIL T.

Recommended

VIRTUAL CONSOLE



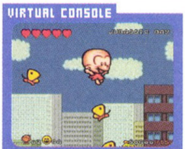
NATSUME CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING

PLATFORM: **SUPER NES**
PUBLISHER: **NATSUME**
GENRE: **SPORTS**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1994**

With very few modes and only a handful of generic characters, Natsume Championship Wrestling has a few strikes against it. But by far the biggest barrier to entry is the unforgiving difficulty. If you can come to grips with the precise timing required, the game can become fairly fun (especially if you're a wrestling fan), although only the most masochistic would attempt Hard mode. —CHRIS H.

Hmmm...

VIRTUAL CONSOLE



SUPER BONK

PLATFORM: **SUPER NES**
PUBLISHER: **HUDSON**
GENRE: **PLATFORMER**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1994**

The original Bonk titles on the TurboGrafx16 were some of the best platformers of the time, and this Super NES follow-up is no different. Bonk's headbutt attack is great fun to use as you work your way through the fairly large and often nonlinear levels. There are plenty of secrets to discover and some very amusing power-up items (including size-altering candy). A great sense of humor tops off this enjoyable (if slightly brief) adventure. —PHIL T.

Recommended

DSiWARE

5 IN 1 MAHJONG

PUBLISHER: **CERASUS.MEDIA**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **200**

It's hard to think of 5 in 1 Mahjong as truly having five distinct modes, considering that the Countdown mode is almost identical to normal mode, and that Remember mode is pointlessly lame. More importantly, though, the game doesn't contain anything that elevates it above ho-hum territory. It's a solid, affordable, user-friendly interpretation of the classic tile-matching pastime, but nothing more. —CHRIS H.

Hmmm...

DSiWARE

Commands the pitcher to get a strikeouts.

TIME-OUT
Strikeouts

ABSOLUTE BASEBALL

PUBLISHER: **TASUKE**
GENRE: **SPORTS**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **500**

I'm a huge baseball nerd, so this management sim should be right in my wheelhouse. Sadly, Absolute Baseball is strictly bush league. The clunky menu interface is complemented by an embarrassingly bad English localization, making even the simplest tasks feel like a chore. —STEVE T.

Grumble Grumble

DSiWARE

HP 900/
SP 224/
17

ANONYMOUS NOTES CHAPTER 1: FROM THE ABYSS

PUBLISHER: **SONIC POWERED**
GENRE: **ADVENTURE**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **200**

A pseudosequel to an obscure retail DS action-RPG called From the Abyss (released in North America in 2008), Anonymous Notes Chapter 1 introduces players to the Abyss Hall, an endless dungeon ripe for slaying and looting. The pure dungeon-crawl premise is shallow, but the old-school combat and impressive variety of monsters, loot, and special moves easily earn your two bucks. —**PATRICK C.**

Recommended

DSiWARE

SCORE 00018480
GEMS X0
EXCELLENT!!
750

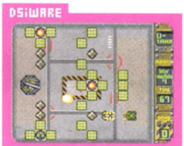
A FAIRY TALE

PUBLISHER: **LEMON GAMES**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **500**

The core mechanics behind this tile-matching game are simple, and it controls rather well with the stylus, but it's not a terribly exciting game to play. The slow pace and bland combo system are interesting for only a while. It's OK in quick bursts, but that's it. —**PHIL T.**

Hmmm...

DSiWARE



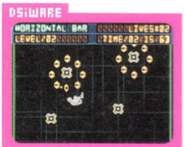
G.G SERIES D-TANK

PUBLISHER: **GENTERPRISE**
GENRE: **SHOOTER**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **200**

G.G Series D-Tank isn't quite a tower-defense game, but it clearly takes its cues from the tower-defense genre. You control your D-tank from an overhead view and protect your base by shooting enemies that repeatedly spawn from the edges of the map. However, the game's overall tank-shooter gameplay feels generic and dull, and the anime girl's constant verbal encouragement/abuse is kind of bothersome. —**CODY M.**

Hmmm...

DSiWARE



G.G SERIES HORIZONTAL BAR

PUBLISHER: **GENTERPRISE**
GENRE: **ACTION**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **200**

You've probably encountered sections of games that require you to swing around a bar and release your grip at the proper time in order to propel your character over to another bar. This game is composed of multiple challenges based on that very mechanic. Collectible coins and a strict time limit make this a suitable score-attack game, but repetition and sluggish controls distract from the enjoyment.

—**PHIL T.**

Hmmm...

DSiWARE

EXPERT
SCORE-01206900
00:23

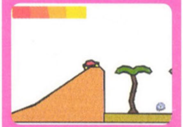
GO SERIES EARTH SAVER

PUBLISHER: **GAMEBRIDGE**
GENRE: **ACTION-PUZZLE**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **500**

Stopping an asteroid apocalypse makes for a fun game. Each level—or meteor—must be methodically broken apart with strategic bomb placements. Earth's destruction also has a countdown, adding challenge to an already frantic situation. —**CODY M.**

Recommended

DSiWARE



JELLYCAR 2

PUBLISHER: **DISNEY INTERACTIVE**
GENRE: **PLATFORMER**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **500**

JellyCar 2 on WiiWare got a Recommended rating, but its DSiWare counterpart is considerably less robust. It provides the same fun, simple gameplay in which you drive/bounce your squishy car from point A to point B, but this edition features only half the levels of the WiiWare version, and there are no two-player or level-creation options. You're better off with the WiiWare iteration—more than double the content, same price.

—**CODY M.**

Hmmm...

DSiWARE

PLANTS VS. ZOMBIES

PUBLISHER: **POPCAP GAMES**
GENRE: **STRATEGY**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **800**

Those who were hesitant to drop $20 on the retail release of Plants vs. Zombies should give this cheaper downloadable version a shot. Yes, the DSiWare edition of this tower-defense game lacks its sibling's multiplayer and Survival, Puzzle, and Zen Garden single-player modes. But I still recommend this title because the gameplay is addictive and the minigames are fun.

—**JUSTIN C.**

Recommended

DSiWARE

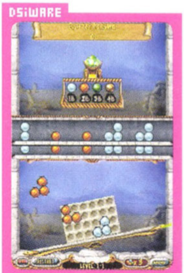
RABI LABY

PUBLISHER: **AGETEC**
GENRE: **ACTION-PUZZLE**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **200**

Some people might call Rabi Laby challenging, but I call it an example of poor game design. Whereas most action-puzzle games introduce a concept and let you learn how to use it, Rabi Laby usually forces you to utilize game mechanics in the trickiest way possible right off the bat. There's no sense of pacing or difficulty curve. When the mostly likely outcome of playing a level is getting trapped and being forced to restart, something is wrong with the game. —**CHRIS H.**

Grumble Grumble

DSiWARE



SHAPO

PUBLISHER: **TIKGAMES**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **500**

Shapo is like Tetris in the sense that you piece together various-shaped blocks to complete and eliminate lines, but Shapo lacks Tetris's sense of urgency as well as its intuitive nature. The result is a puzzle game that isn't bad but isn't very satisfying either. —**CHRIS H.**

Hmmm...

DSiWARE

simply
SOLITAIRE
Draw one
Puzzle 13
Time: 0:46
Cards left: 20

SIMPLY SOLITAIRE

PUBLISHER: **ENGINE SOFTWARE**
GENRE: **CARD GAME**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **200**

If you're itching for a cheap, portable version of solitaire, this game fits the bill, but it doesn't do much more. This title has virtually no modes or options (not even an undo button or an alert when a game is rendered unwinnable), and the presentation is passable at best. —**CHRIS H.**

Grumble Grumble

PREVIEWS

IN THIS SECTION

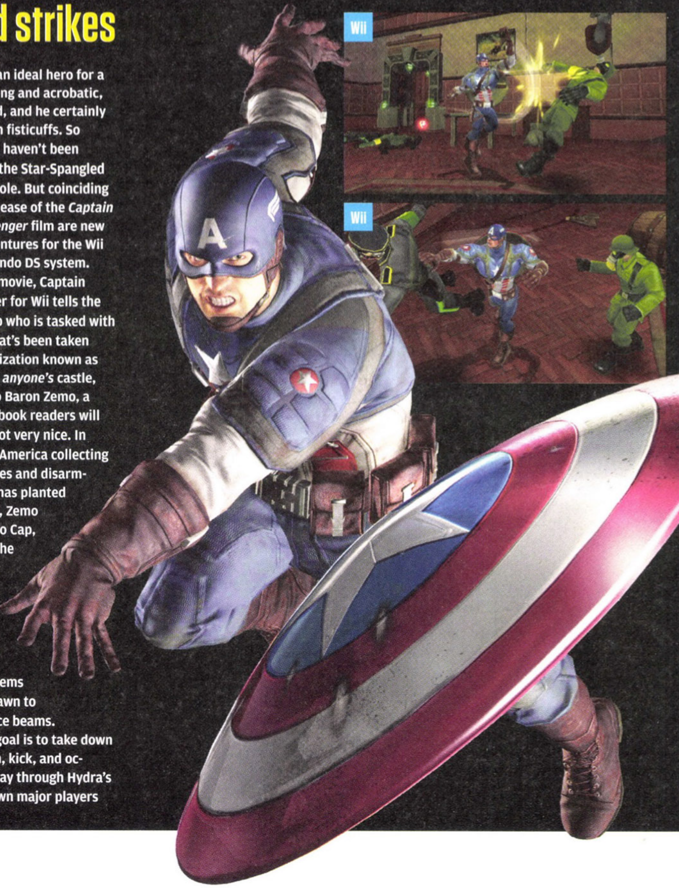
Wii PREVIEWS
CAPTAIN AMERICA: SUPER SOLDIER pg.34

DS PREVIEWS
CAPTAIN AMERICA: SUPER SOLDIER pg.34

NINTENDO 3DS PREVIEWS
DRIVER RENEGADE pg.38
DUAL PEN SPORTS pg.39
GABRIELLE'S GHOSTLY GROOVE 3D pg.39
GREEN LANTERN: RISE OF THE MANHUNTERS pg.37
JAMES NOIR'S HOLLYWOOD CRIMES pg.40
REEL FISHING PARADISE 3D pg.37
RESIDENT EVIL: THE MERCENARIES 3D pg.36

CAPTAIN AMERICA: SUPER SOLDIER

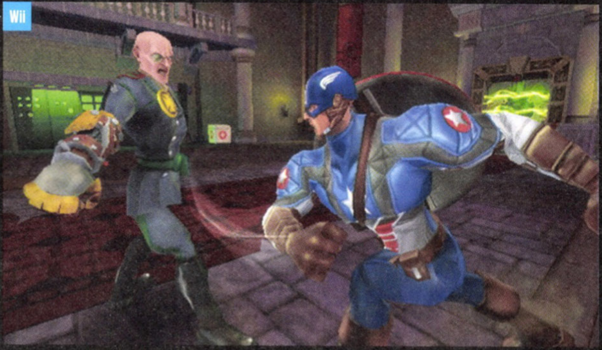
Stars and strikes



CAPTAIN AMERICA IS an ideal hero for a video game: he is strong and acrobatic, he has a mighty shield, and he certainly doesn't shy away from fisticuffs. So it's strange that there haven't been many titles featuring the Star-Spangled Avenger in a leading role. But coinciding with the upcoming release of the *Captain America: The First Avenger* film are new Captain America adventures for the Wii console and the Nintendo DS system.

A side story to the movie, Captain America: Super Soldier for Wii tells the tale of a WWII-era Cap who is tasked with infiltrating a castle that's been taken over by the evil organization known as Hydra. This is not just *anyone's* castle, however; it belongs to Baron Zemo, a character that comic-book readers will recognize as being...not very nice. In exchange for Captain America collecting Zemo's family treasures and disarming the bombs Hydra has planted throughout the castle, Zemo offers his assistance to Cap, guiding him through the enormous estate that is teeming with platforming opportunities. The platforming isn't especially challenging, though, as Cap seems to be magnetically drawn to objects such as balance beams.

But Cap's primary goal is to take down Hydra. He must punch, kick, and occasionally shoot his way through Hydra's underlings to take down major players



such as Madame Hydra, Arnim Zola, and Baron Von Strucker. Designed to be a Saturday-morning-cartoon-style adventure—as evidenced by the characters' cartoony proportions—the game has pick-up-and-play controls. You press B to attack, A to jump, and Z to reverse enemies' attacks. The Z Button becomes especially important when you're surrounded by foes—a common occurrence in this title—as it helps keep the enemies from overwhelming you. Of course, it helps to thin Hydra's numbers before they get up close and personal. You can sneak up behind an unaware opponent and knock him out with a stealth attack, or you can strike from a distance with your shield by tapping C. Holding C and pointing the Wii Remote controller lets you aim your throw and paint targets. Besides being a great way to take out baddies, this ability allows you to solve puzzles that involve hitting multiple switches.

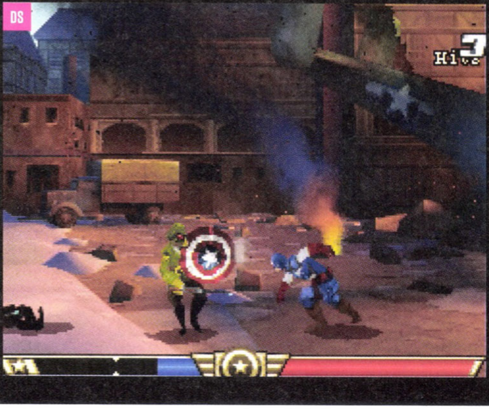
Naturally, you solve puzzles a bit differently in the DS game. Some require you to punch switches to stop moving platforms, and others are stylus-controlled touch-screen puzzles in which you spin a wheel to open a vault door or tap to break open a console.

Aside from this—and from the fact that it's a side-scrolling game with level layouts in the style of Metroid—the handheld version of Captain America: Super Soldier isn't all that different than its Wii sibling: Both games have captured GIs to rescue and alternate costumes to unlock, Chris Evans reprises his role as Captain America in both titles' cut-scenes, and both titles are heavily focused on platforming and fighting against Hydra's forces. The DS version's controls aren't that different from the Wii version's, either: you press B to jump, A to throw your shield, Y to punch, X to grab opponents, and R to block. But there are nuances to the controls that give the handheld game some depth. For instance, hitting R at just the right moment is what the developers call a "perfect block," which makes you temporarily invincible—a handy technique when facing Hydra's massive walking tanks. Also helpful—and also not in the Wii version—is the Serum Meter. When it's filled halfway, you can unleash a screen-filling Shield Attack; when it's filled completely, you can activate the Super Serum mode, which enhances Cap's strength to such an extent that he can knock adversaries across the screen.

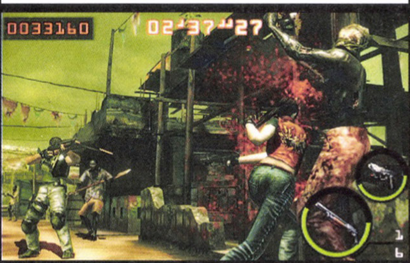
In addition to these Wii and DS editions of Captain America: Super Soldier, you can look forward to a version for the Nintendo 3DS system. However, Sega remains tight-lipped about the details of the 3D title. —JUSTIN C.

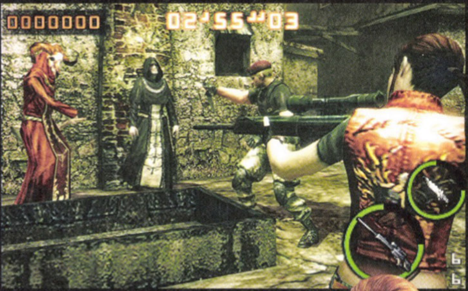
Wii DS **PUBLISHER:** SEGA
DEVELOPER: HIGH VOLTAGE SOFTWARE (Wii), GRIPTONITE GAMES (DS)
RELEASE: JULY 2011

[Right] When Captain America throws his mighty shield, all those who chose to oppose his shield must get hit in the face.



[Below] You won't see any sibling rivalry in this game.





RESIDENT EVIL: THE MERCENARIES 3D

Live by the gun

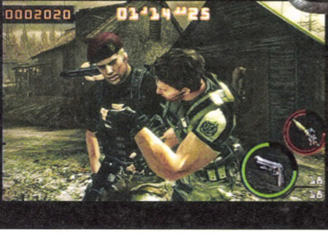
IN LAST ISSUE'S feature story we talked extensively about the Resident Evil franchise's foray onto the Nintendo 3DS system, but as the release date for the M-rated Resident Evil: The Mercenaries 3D nears, we recently got an updated hands-on experience. While trying out the local-wireless co-op functionality (which makes the game a lot more fun), we played as fan favorites Jill Valentine and Albert Wesker. Sure, we knew the former S.T.A.R.S. members were in the game, but we had not been able to assume their roles previously. Jill is armed with an assault rifle, a knife, and a shotgun; Wesker has a pistol, a Desert Eagle, and a triple-barreled shotgun.

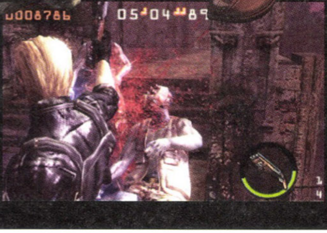
Despite having these powerful firearms at our disposal, however, we relied mostly on the assault rifle and pistol, shooting the weapon-wielding not-zombie enemies in the knees. This stuns the ganados/majini and leaves them open for a melee strike, such as Jill's roundhouse kick or Wesker's Tiger Uppercut (although Wesker doesn't quite get the elevation that Sagat from Street Fighter does). Not only do melee attacks help you save ammo, but successful hits also add five seconds to the clock. This is very helpful when you're given only two or three minutes to kill as many baddies as you can. (There are also items strewn throughout the levels that give you extra time.) Unlike the other characters, the superpowered Wesker has a bonus ability; pressing right on the Control Pad allows Wesker to dash, making it easier to escape from the especially lethal chainsaw- or axe-swinging adversaries.

In addition to the weapons and melee attacks, each character can be equipped with three skills of your choosing. You will have 30 skills to pick from in the final game, but we weren't able to pick our skills in our demo. Instead, we could select from six premade sets that were designed to grant certain benefits, such as making combos easier to continue, increasing your attack or defensive power, or adding electricity damage to melee strikes.

Resident Evil: The Mercenaries 3D seems to get better every time we play it. We can only hope that the final product continues this trend.
—**JUSTIN C.**

N3DS **PUBLISHER: CAPCOM**
DEVELOPER: CAPCOM
RELEASE: JUNE 2011





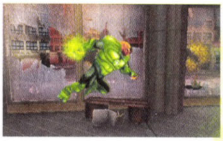
GREEN LANTERN: RISE OF THE MANHUNTERS

No evil shall escape his sight.

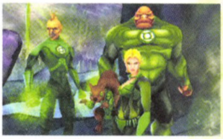
DC Comics's entry in this summer of superhero flicks is *Green Lantern,* a sci-fi adventure in which test pilot Hal Jordan joins the Green Lantern Corps (think space police) and uses a ring that allows him to conjure up anything imaginable. Accompanying the movie's debut is Green Lantern: Rise of the Manhunters for the Nintendo 3DS system, a galaxy-spanning title inspired by Metroid wherein a rookie Hal Jordan is tasked with taking down the mechanical, malevolent Manhunters. (Wii and Nintendo DS versions of Rise of the Manhunters are also on the way.)

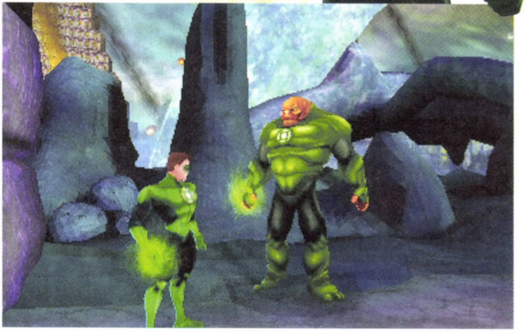
The level we played had us exploring a planet in the Vega system that is infested with spiderlike enemies and Manhunters. Using Hal's Power Ring we punched them with giant fists, smashed them with enormous hammers, crushed them with humongous weights, and shot them with colossal hot dogs. In addition to these attacks, we had access to special Power Ring abilities, such as temporary invincibility or an area-clearing blast. —JUSTIN C.

N3DS
PUBLISHER: WARNER BROS. INTERACTIVE
DEVELOPER: GRIPTONITE GAMES
RELEASE: JUNE 2011



[Below] Even the not-as-famous members of the GL Corps are represented.



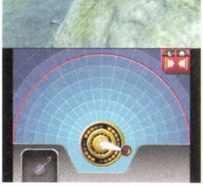


REEL FISHING PARADISE 3D

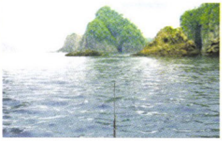
This one might get you hooked.

Though fishing games tend to be pretty impenetrable for all but hardcore anglers, Reel Fishing Paradise 3D—the first fishing game for the Nintendo 3DS—is astonishingly user-friendly. The controls are easy to grasp whether you're using the buttons or the touch screen (you can cast by flicking the screen, and reel by rotating the onscreen handle), and the fish are eager to bite; you won't spend minutes at a time just waiting for something to happen. But that's not to say that this is an easy or shallow game; it has plenty of content to please both fishing vets and newcomers alike, including 15 lifelike environments, 40 types of fish, and more than 100 types of tackle. You can transfer any fish you catch to your personal aquarium so you can view and care for the creatures at any time, and you'll unlock new tank decorations as you progress through the game by completing missions handed out by the local fishing master. Even if Reel Fishing Paradise 3D doesn't turn you into a die-hard fishing fan, it certainly seems like a step in the right direction. —CHRIS H.

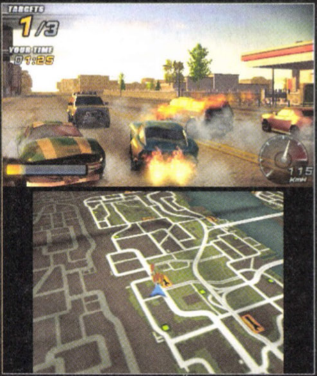
N3DS
PUBLISHER: NATSUME
DEVELOPER: NATSUME/MARVELOUS
RELEASE: JUNE 2011



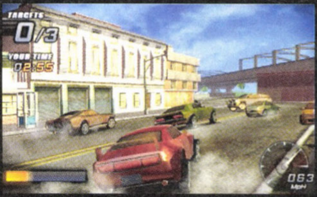
[Below] Kick back and relax at 15 photorealistic fishing locales.



NEW YORK
POLICE



[Above] Given how easily they catch fire, most of the cars in Driver should probably be subject to a recall.

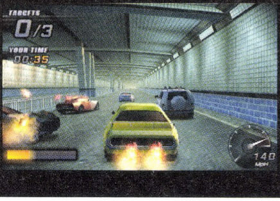


DRIVER RENEGADE

To protect and swerve

JOHN TANNER IS fed up. The undercover detective and longtime protagonist of the Driver series has always practiced his own unique methods when it comes to enforcing the law. Yet it seems the desk jockeys down at the station frown upon ramming a suspect's vehicle until it explodes in the middle of New York City. Pansies. So our boy is going renegade.

Happily for us, that means the opportunity to wreak more vehicular havoc. We recently had a chance to get behind the wheel of this Mature-rated Nintendo 3DS exclusive, and it plays much like you would expect of a Driver game. Objectives vary from mission to mission, but they typically involve either chasing down or trying to evade bad guys on the streets of the Big Apple. Between missions, the story unfolds through comic-book-style cut-scenes that are fully voiced. What we've heard of the dialogue thus far is pretty cheesy, and Tanner's voice actor, in particular, is hilariously over-the-top, so it's probably best not to expect a Scorsese-level narrative (despite a comparable amount of swearing).



The driving gameplay takes an arcade-inspired approach, with a handbrake that lets you take turns at full speed, the ability to effortlessly sideswipe other cars via the L or R Buttons, and a nitro gauge that fills when you smash through street lamps and newsstands. (That pains me as an editor for a print magazine, by the way. Why can't we crash into some Internet servers or something?) The debris that results from such automotive mayhem flies toward the screen, highlighting some nicely executed 3D effects. Detailed street textures and solid lighting impress, as well, but we hope Ubisoft can iron out the draw-in issues that plagued our demo.

In addition to the main Story campaign, Driver Renegade includes a robust Career mode that consists of various stand-alone events. These range from timed races on specific routes through the city to demolition derbies that task you with destroying property and pulling off stunts. You'll unlock new cars for completing certain events, and StreetPass functionality allows you to exchange records with your fellow wheelmen. —**STEVE T.**

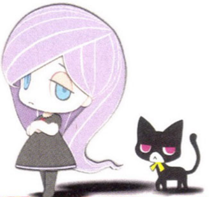
N3DS
PUBLISHER: UBISOFT
DEVELOPER: UBISOFT
RELEASE: JUNE 2011

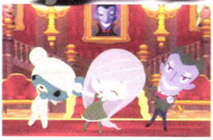
GABRIELLE'S GHOSTLY GROOVE 3D

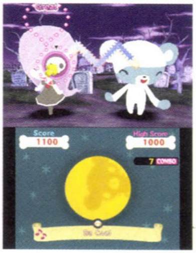
It's a dance party wild enough to wake the undead.

There are lots of serious video games about zombies, vampires, werewolves, and other creatures of the night. Gabrielle's Ghostly Groove 3D isn't one of them. Junior-high student Gabrielle's adventure begins when she sneezes so hard that she blows her soul right out of her body, and the only way to return to normal is to enlist the aid of the denizens of Monsterville. And as you might guess from the game's title, that means helping characters such as Vlad the vampire (he looks like a cross between Pee-wee Herman and *Sesame Street*'s Count) get down with their bad selves. By rhythmically tapping the screen when skull icons appear and tracing paths by moving the stylus along the touch screen, you'll put on a show that elicits screams from nearby humans. Scoring high not only moves you closer to getting your body back, but earns you clothes and accessories to customize your character. You'll also partake in four minigames, including one in which you help a werewolf reassemble skeletons. —**CHRIS H.**

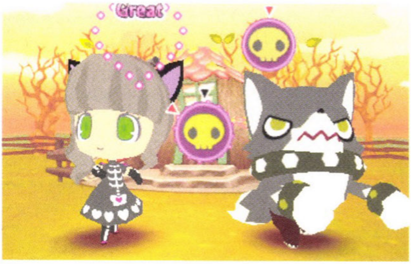
N3DS PUBLISHER: **NATSUME**
DEVELOPER: **SANTA**
RELEASE: **SUMMER 2011**

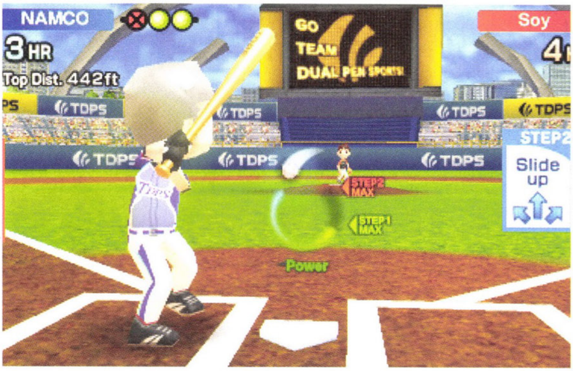


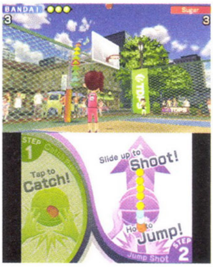



Great
Score
1100
High Score
1000
7 COMBO

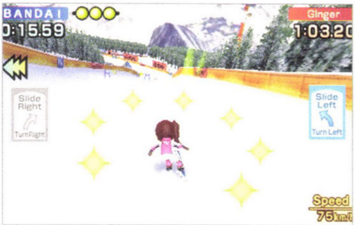
[Below] Wanna give Gabrielle some cat ears? Done and done!




NAMCO
3HR
Top Dist. 442ft
GO TEAM DUAL PEN SPORTS!
Soy
TDPS
STEP2
Slide up
STEP2 MAX
STEP1 MAX
Power


BANDAI
Sugar
STEP 1
Tap to Catch!
Slide up to Shoot!
Hold to Jump!
STEP 2
Jump Shot

In addition to the events pictured here, Dual Pen Sports includes boxing, archery, soccer, and paragliding.

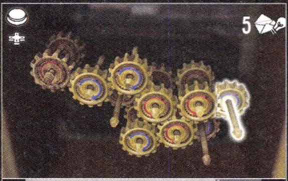

BANDAI
0:15.59
Ginger
1:03.20
Slide Right
Turn Right
Slide Left
Turn Left
Speed
75km/

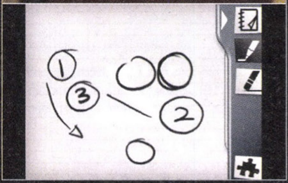
DUAL PEN SPORTS

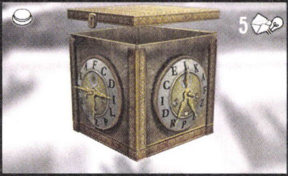
When one pen just isn't mighty enough

If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, then Wii Sports has been flattered quite a bit over the years. The latest compliment comes from Namco Bandai's Dual Pen Sports, a collection of seven athletically themed minigames for the Nintendo 3DS. As the title implies, each competition revolves around using two touch pens at the same time. (A pair of styli comes included with the game.) In baseball, for instance, you slide one pen down the left side of the touch screen to start your hitter's leg kick, then slide the other pen up the right side to swing for the fences. Boxing turns each stylus into one of your avatar's fists, allowing you to throw different types of punches depending on your strokes. We'll have to see whether Dual Pen Sports can prove as engaging as its source of inspiration, but at least this particular imitator offers its own unique twist. —**STEVE T.**

N3DS PUBLISHER: **NAMCO BANDAI**
DEVELOPER: **INDIES ZERO**
RELEASE: **SUMMER 2011**







JAMES NOIRE'S HOLLYWOOD CRIMES

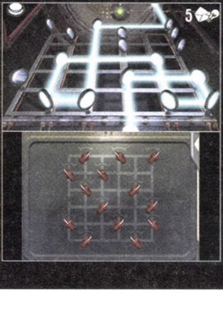
On the most popular game show in Hollywood, the grand prize...is murder.

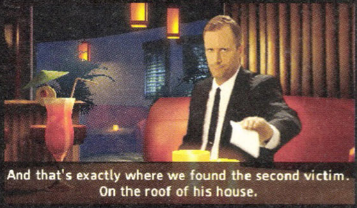
SO YOU WANNA be a star? In James Noir's Hollywood Crimes, you'll get your chance. As a contestant on a fictional game show called *The Incredible Puzzle Masters*, you'll make your bid for fame and fortune in 1960s Hollywood. As you might guess, that means solving puzzles—lots of puzzles. On each episode of the show, you'll get to participate in a variety of challenges similar to what you'd find in a Professor Layton title, ranging from sliding-block puzzles to mathematical contests. In one puzzle you'll have to find a hidden pattern on a grid, while in another you'll sort colored marbles by dropping them into a strange contraption, and in another you'll slide a cube through a maze (accomplished by actually tilting your Nintendo 3DS system). By meeting each week's point quota, you'll get ever closer to becoming the show's reigning champion.

But scoring points in front of a studio audience is only half of what Hollywood Crimes is about. When you're not solving puzzles on TV, you'll be recruited by FBI agent Matt Becker—your former college roommate—to help him unravel a series of murders in which the victims are former *Puzzle Masters* winners. The killer, it seems, also has a fondness for puzzles, and he leaves behind clues at every crime scene that indicate where he'll strike next. By moving matchsticks and assembling handcrafted wooden blocks, for example, you'll learn an address, and by viewing a chandelier from a particular angle, you'll see an image that points you toward a certain room. Each step forward, naturally, leads to more puzzles. Can't get the elevator working? Better rearrange some gears. Want to brighten up a room? Time to manipulate some mirrors.

Anyone could be the criminal—it could be the show's host, Glenn Darnby; or the annoying producer, Trudy Mills; or maybe a rival contestant. But early on, you learn that the number-one suspect is actually you, and that your past could contain psychotic episodes and subsequent memory loss. Just what deep, dark secrets will your puzzle-solving prowess reveal? We'll have to play the final game to find out. —**CHRIS H.**

N3DS **PUBLISHER:** UBISOFT
DEVELOPER: UBISOFT MONTREAL
RELEASE: JUNE 2011





And that's exactly where we found the second victim.
On the roof of his house.

[Above] Say hi to FBI agent Matt Becker. He may kinda look like a sleazebag, but...actually, he probably is a sleazebag.

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

THE OFFICIAL NINTENDO MAGAZINE

Wii SONIC 4!
CONDUIT 2
ZELDA SECRETS
MARIO ROCKS!
SUPER REVIEW!
YEAR OF THE MOUSE!
NINTENDO 3DS
METROID MANIA
GIANT REVIEWS
SONIC COLORS FIRST REVIEW!
GREAT APE!
MARIO SPORTS MIX
ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL!
NINTENDO POWER
25 YEARS OF NES
26-PAGE TRIBUTE
We salute the games, controllers, codes, and even the boxes behind the system that started it all!

SAVE 72%*

12 ISSUES FOR $19.95

www.nintendopower.com/replynow

*Subscription offer good in the U.S. only. Newsstand price is U.S. $5.99 per issue.
For more information visit www.nintendopower.com/customerservice

Game trademarks and copyrights are properties of their respective owners.
Nintendo properties are trademarks of Nintendo.

Nintendo Power magazine is published
by Future US, Inc., under official license
from Nintendo of America.

© 2011 Future US, Inc.

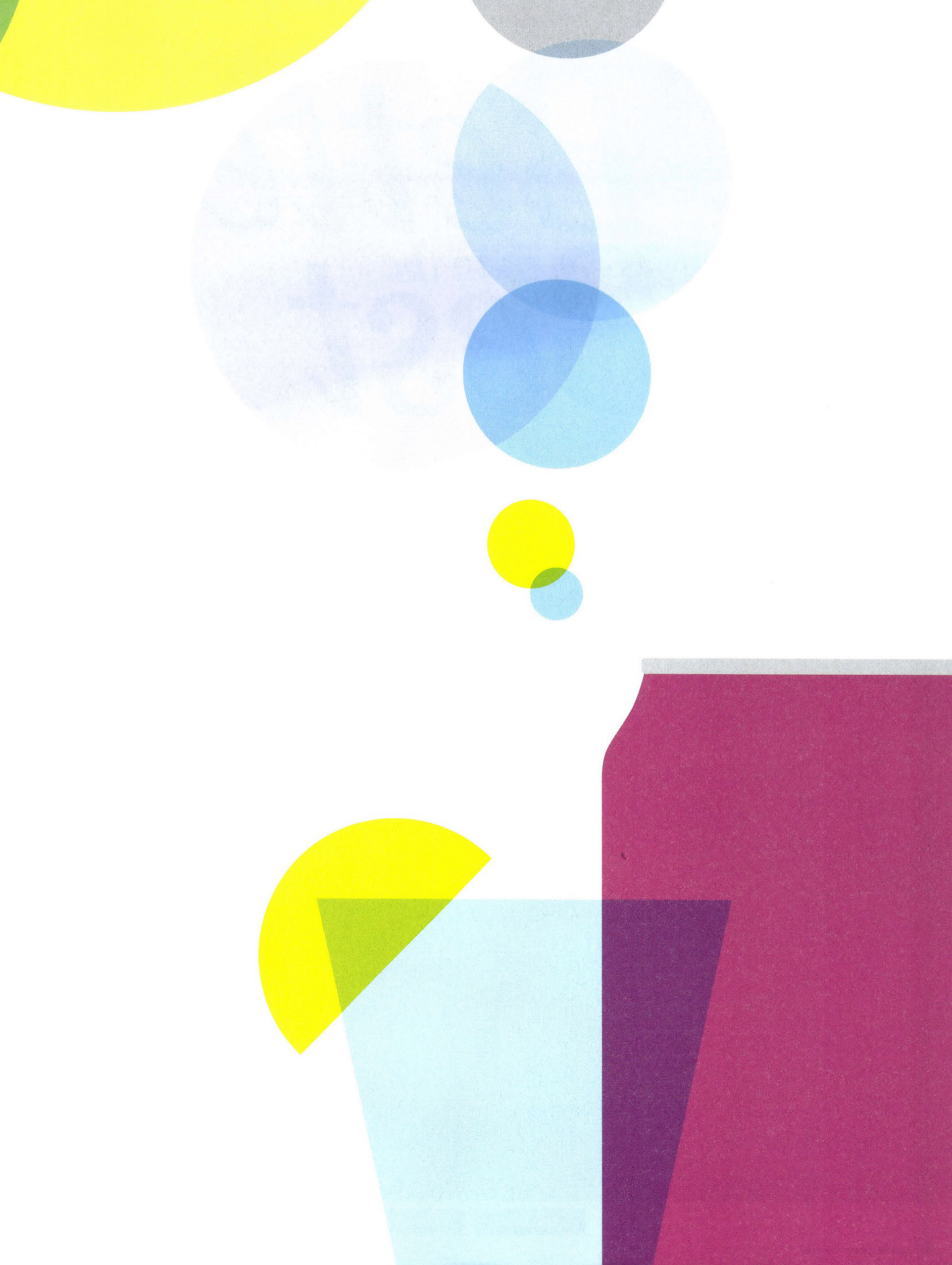
OUR STANDARDS BEAT THEIR EXTRAS.

Award-winning customer service, unlimited brand-name snacks and soft drinks, 36 channels of free DIRECTV® and the most legroom in coach.* Fly now at jetblue.com

YOU ABOVE ALL

jetBlue

*Available on flights in continental U.S. only. Based on the average fleet-wide seat pitch of U.S. airlines.

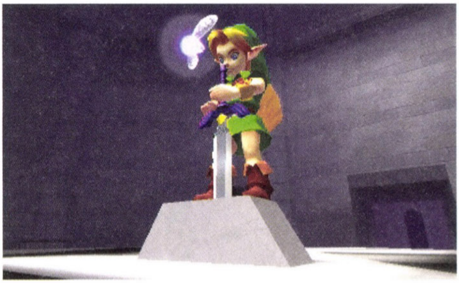


Better than the Best

How do you improve upon perfection? Nintendo shows us with ***The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time 3D.***

BY **CHRIS HOFFMAN**

PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO** DEVELOPER: **NINTENDO/GREZZO** RELEASE: **JUNE 2011** **N3DS**



Since its release in 1998 on the Nintendo 64, The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time has been one of the most critically acclaimed games ever created. It wasn't just the game that brought the beloved Legend of Zelda franchise into a three-dimensional world; it was the game that established the blueprint for the modern adventure genre and set new standards in immersion and storytelling. The title stands as the most highly praised game of all time according to review-aggregate websites, and many publications have heralded it as the pinnacle of interactive entertainment. Although the game has been rereleased a few times over the years (specifically on GameCube and Virtual Console) those versions have essentially been direct ports of the N64 original. Now, with the impending arrival of The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time 3D, this unparalleled classic is receiving a thorough upgrade—stereoscopic 3D visuals, control enhancements, and more—for the series's debut on the Nintendo 3DS handheld.

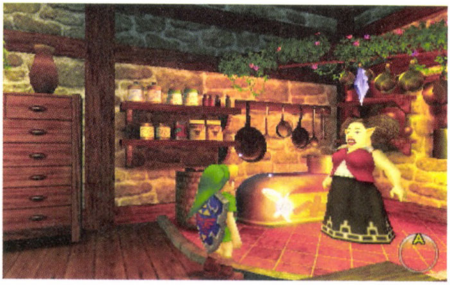
The game begins in familiar fashion. After dreaming about a frightened young princess fleeing from a wicked man in black armor, a green-garbed lad named Link (or whatever you choose to name him) wakes in his hut in Kokiri Forest. Though the forest has been Link's home his entire life, he's been something of an outsider; unlike the other Kokiri people, he doesn't even have a fairy. But Link's ordinary life takes a dramatic turn when he's summoned by the forest's guardian spirit, the Deku Tree. Suddenly befriended by a talkative fairy named Navi, Link speedily acquires a sword and shield and sets out to see what the Deku Tree has in store for him.

Of course, if you've played Ocarina of Time in any of its previous incarnations, none of that is new to you. It doesn't take long, however, to see the benefits of the game's transition to Nintendo 3DS. The most obvious enhancement is to the visuals; as good as the N64 version looked in its day, the Nintendo 3DS rendition looks exponentially better. Not only is the adventure presented in stereoscopic 3D, but virtually every texture is much cleaner and more detailed, and increased-polygon character models look significantly smoother, particularly their faces. Link himself looks magnificent, and even ancillary characters, such as the Kokiri villagers, feature notable improvements. Characters still sometimes fade into view as you approach them, but it's not nearly as unsightly as it was on the N64.

Perhaps the most notable visual improvements are to building interiors and other static environments. Previously presented as flat prerendered backgrounds, interiors are now fully polygonal constructs that provide a heightened sense of interactivity. Furthermore, they've been enhanced with a staggering level of detail. The Kokiri Forest shop, for example, was previously almost bare but now boasts a sign made from a giant leaf next to the counter, bags of goods in the background, detailed posters on the far wall, an intricately patterned rug on the floor, and pots in the foreground (which really pop out at you in 3D). Almost every interior in the game is more vibrant and alive thanks to a similar level of enhancement.

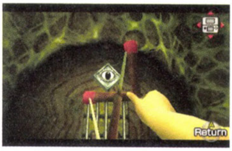
The graphics aren't the only aspect of the game to receive a revamp; the controls and interface have been updated, too. Whereas the original game let you equip three items to various buttons, the Nintendo 3DS version allows you to equip four: one to the X Button, one to the Y Button, and two to touch-screen buttons labeled I and II. (You

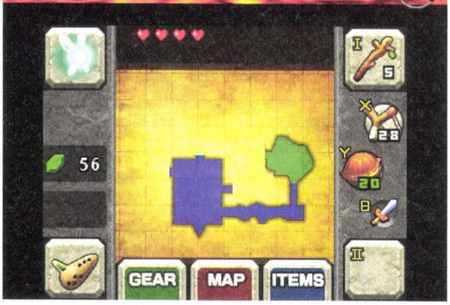
ALL SCREENSHOTS HAVE BEEN CAPTURED IN 2D MODE.



[Above] The interior environments demonstrate just how much extra care has gone into The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time 3D. Rooms that were once stark and bare are now filled with details such as bottle-cluttered shelves.

You played Zelda's Lullaby.



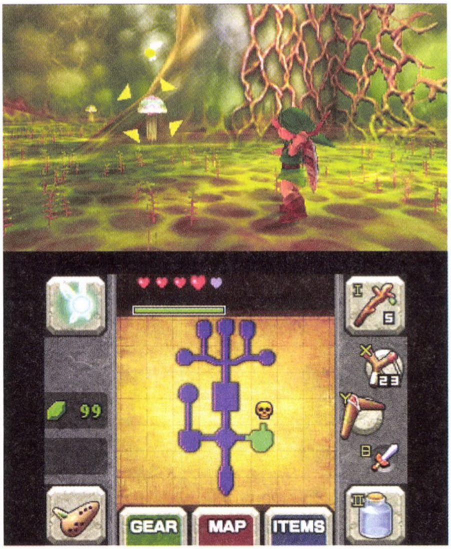


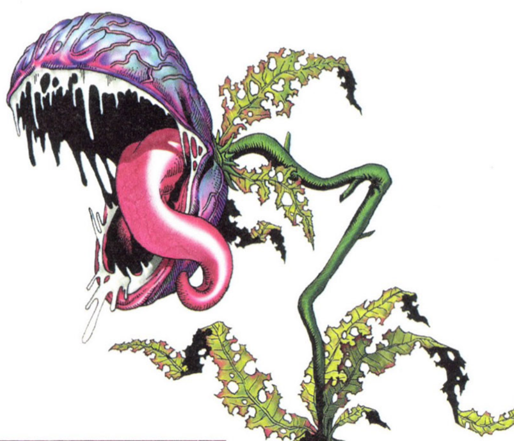
can also activate the items assigned to X and Y by pressing icons on the touch screen.) The equipment screen (used for changing swords, shields, and tunics) has been simplified with a touch-controlled interface, and when you switch into first-person-view mode (triggered through a touch-screen button) or ready certain weapons, you can use the hardware's built-in gyro sensor to look around by simply moving the Nintendo 3DS system. You can survey your surroundings via the Circle Pad, too, but the motion-controlled method works flawlessly and it's arguably more intuitive.

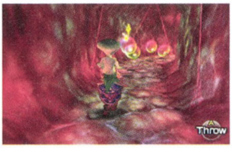
Basic actions, on the other hand, haven't changed much—you move Link with the Circle Pad, swing your sword with B, perform actions with A, lock onto enemies with L, and raise your shield with R. The Circle Pad works like a charm; it's especially effective for performing smooth motions such as the 360-degree rotation required for Link's trademark spin attack.

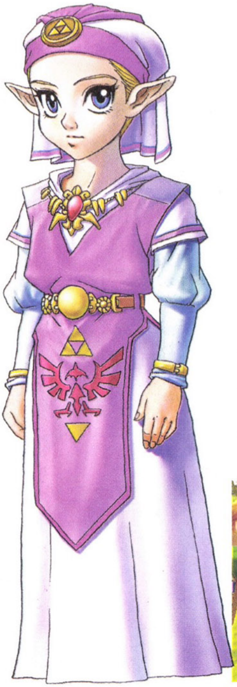
A TIMELESS QUEST BEGINS

As Zelda fans know, however, Ocarina of Time is about much more than taking advantage of the latest technological advancements. It's about the sense of wonder, exploration, and adventure that accompanies you on every step of the journey. After meeting with the Deku Tree, Link learns that forces of evil are gaining strength, and that "a vile climate pervades the land and causes nightmares to those sensitive to it." Even the Deku Tree is not immune to these dark forces,





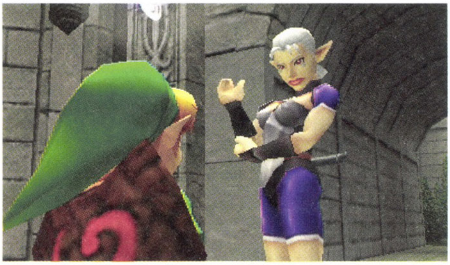




and he requests that Link go inside him to break the curse that's been placed upon his body. [Editor's Note: Mild spoilers ahead for the first leg of Link's journey.]

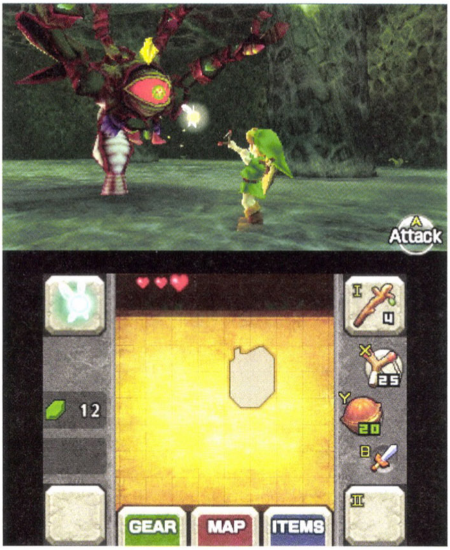
The depths of the Deku Tree, naturally, comprise the game's first dungeon, where you'll refamiliarize yourself with Zelda basics of combat and puzzle-solving by chopping down aggressive Deku Baba plants, eliminating vile Skulltula spiders, reflecting projectiles back at Deku Scrubs, pushing blocks, stepping on switches, lighting torches, and engaging in other activities that have made the Zelda series so popular over the years. You'll also acquire the slingshot—one of the items that takes advantage of the new gyro-sensor controls—which comes in quite handy when facing the source of the curse: the huge parasitic armored arachnid, Gohma. Though the boss looks more visually impressive than ever, his tactics haven't changed; he'll fall to the same techniques that Ocarina of Time players have been using for years. (And if you need a hint, don't worry; Navi's advice is only a touch-screen press away.)

With the curse broken, the Deku Tree gives Link a brief history lesson—explaining the land of Hyrule was created by three goddesses who left behind a powerful object called the Triforce when they departed for the heavens—and implores Link to leave the forest, see the outside world, and visit Hyrule Castle to meet with the "princess of destiny." As Link prepares for his journey and says his farewells, his friend Saria presents him with a gift—the Fairy Ocarina. Unlike in the N64 version



[Above] Zelda's bodyguard Impa knows how to kick butt and take names.

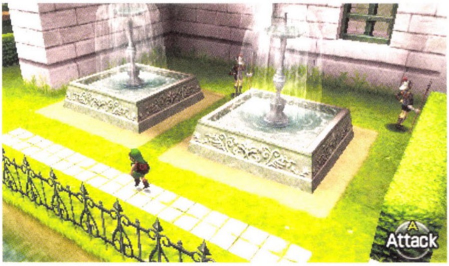
ALL SCREENSHOTS HAVE BEEN CAPTURED IN 2D MODE.



of the game, you don't need to equip the ocarina to use it; it gets its own touch-screen button that enables you to activate it at almost any time, after which you can play notes by touching the screen or by pressing the L, Y, X, A, and R Buttons. As the game's title implies, the ocarina is an essential item, and throughout the adventure Link will learn a number of tunes to aid him in his quest. (In another interface refinement, you can call up your song list directly from the ocarina-playing screen instead of navigating layers of menus.)

Armed with the knowledge and tools he needs, young Link departs from Kokiri Forest and enters the glorious realm of Hyrule. For many players, this is where Ocarina of Time begins to really hit its stride, as you're presented with a wide-open world full of possibilities. As you run across the grassy plains of Hyrule Field, dangerous creatures protect their territory, day turns to night and back again (beware the skeletons that emerge when the sun sets!), and natural wonders in the distance hint at just how vast the adventure will become. Your first stop, though, is Hyrule Castle Town, which is a fairly short distance away.

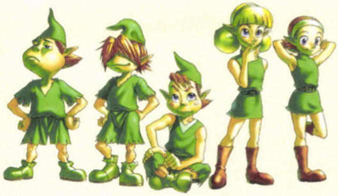
Upon entering the town, you're reminded once again how much the game's graphics have improved



The Peoples of Hyrule

The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time was the first game in the Zelda series to introduce a variety of distinct races. Here are some of the diverse peoples that Link encounters as he explores Hyrule.

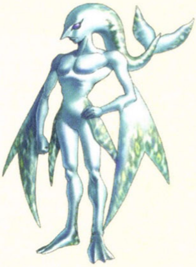
* * *



Kokiri

Known as "the children of the forest," the Kokiri live peaceful lives under the protection of the mighty Deku Tree. The Kokiri never seem to age, and always keep their youthful appearances. Link grew up as a member of the Kokiri clan.

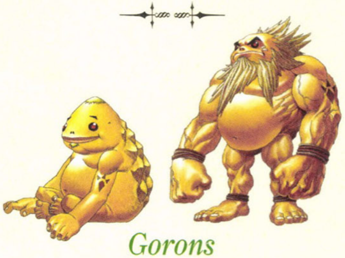
* * *



Zora

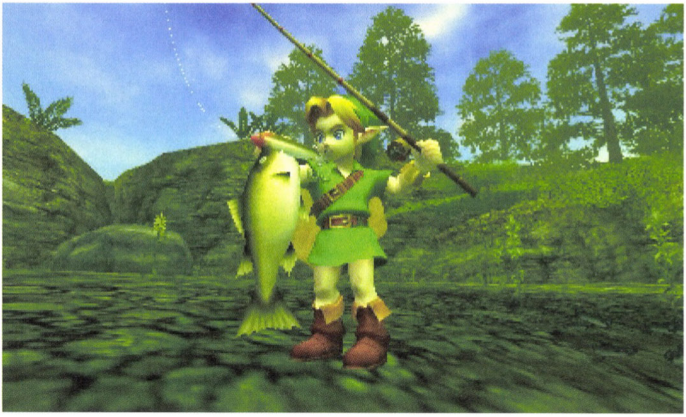
Though the Zora in the earliest Zelda games were monsters, Ocarina of Time reintroduced the Zora as a noble and elegant race. Led by King Zora XVI, the Zora reside in a region of Hyrule called Zora's Domain, and they can often be seen at Lake Hylia. King Zora's daughter, Princess Ruto, may have a crush on Link.

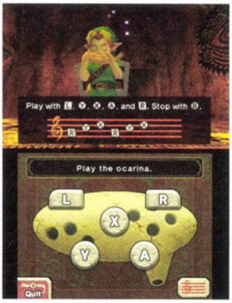
* * *



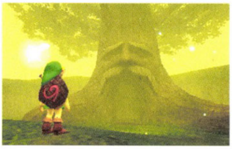
Gorons

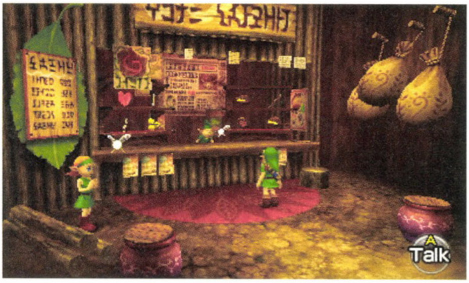
Hearty and powerful, the Gorons are rugged mountain-dwellers who hardly know their own strength. They're able to curl up and roll around like boulders, and they love to snack on rocks. Their leader, Darunia, comes to accept Link has his "sworn brother."





[Above] Now featuring a new interface, the ocarina plays a critical role in Link's quest. [Left] Everybody's favorite Zelda pastime, fishing, is back. Link's caught a lunker!





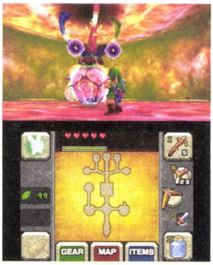
over their original form. The town marketplace and the nearby Temple of Time look remarkably clean, crisp, and beautiful, while businesses such as the bazaar, the Happy Mask Shop, the potion shop, and the shooting gallery all benefit from an abundance of colorful details. Now's not the ideal time for shopping, though—the princess awaits.

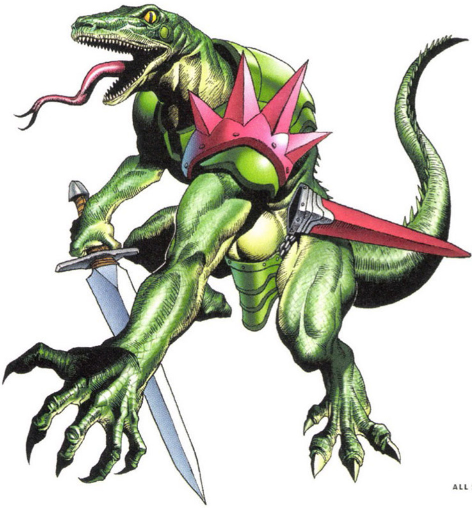
Unfortunately for Link, the castle guards aren't willing to let some random forest kid visit the royal family. Your only recourse is to climb over the gate, sneak past several guards, crawl into the castle through an aqueduct, and make your way past another gauntlet of soldiers. Doing so will bring you to the castle courtyard, where you'll come face to face with young Princess Zelda herself. Although initially startled by his presence, Zelda quickly decides that Link is the one she's been waiting for—the hero that will help her protect the Triforce from Ganondorf, the sinister man from Link's dream. To do so, Link must seek out two Spiritual Stones that, alongside the Kokiri's Emerald that Link received from the Deku Tree, will help keep the Triforce out of Ganondorf's grasp.

THROUGH ROCK AND WATER

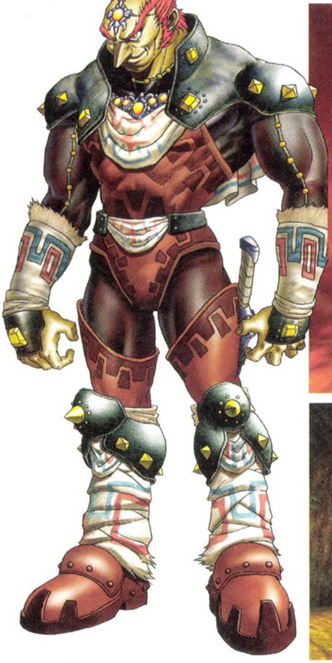
Although Link's next duty is to get the Goron's Ruby from near Death Mountain, it's hard to resist taking a break to explore the vast world. There are secret locations to discover, Pieces of Heart (for expanding your life meter) to collect, and upgrades to earn. If you head west, you can stop by the thoroughly gorgeous fishing pond near Lake Hylia to relax for a bit, and you'll definitely want to stop by Lon Lon Ranch in the center of Hyrule Field. The ranch—run by the Marioesque Talon and his daughter Malon—provides another example of how much care has gone into embellishing the game's visuals. In the N64 game, Malon's room was as bare as a prison cell, but it's now decorated with crayon drawings hanging from the wall, stuffed toys near her bed, and flowers and other knickknacks on the nightstand. There's even a child's sketch of Malon and her dad on the wall, hidden behind some crates.

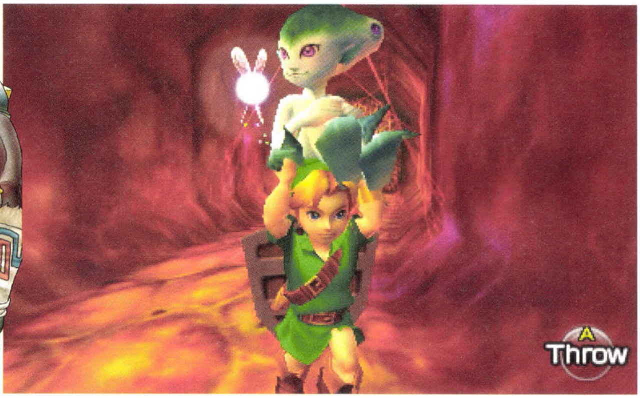
Once you're ready to get back to the task at hand, you'll need to visit the village of Kakariko, then follow the nearby mountain path to the Goron's cavernous abode. Though the rugged Gorons are generally friendly, you'll soon discover that tragedy has befallen the city, and its citizens are on the brink of starvation. Proud as they are, the Gorons don't easily turn





ALL SCREENSHOTS HAVE BEEN CAPTURED IN 2D MODE.





[Above] Link attempts to start a new fashion trend by wearing a Zora girl on his head.

to outsiders for help, which means you'll have to earn the trust of their leader, Darunia. And even after you've done that—and received the Goron's Bracelet, which increases Link's strength—you'll still have to venture into Dodongo's Cavern (the location of the Gorons' primary food source) and slay the monsters within. If you manage to overcome the cavern's traps and puzzles then defeat the gargantuan King Dodongo, you'll not only emerge with bombs added to your inventory, but you'll earn the gratitude of the Gorons and acquire the Goron's Ruby as a symbol of your friendship.

The route to the third Spiritual Stone follows a similar path of helping those in need, but instead of ascending rocky peaks, you'll need to follow the river to Zora's Domain, the home of an aquatic fishlike people. Here you'll discover that King Zora's daughter, Princess Ruto, has gone missing, and that she can be found in—of all places—the belly of the Zora's guardian deity: a colossal fish named Jabu-Jabu. Inside the beast, you'll encounter unique visuals (the fleshy, organic environments look more natural than ever before) and novel gameplay that requires you to carry the princess from chamber to chamber and occasionally use her as a weapon (by throwing her at enemies) or a tool (by placing her on switches). You'll also find a boomerang—another item that can be aimed via gyro sensor—within Jabu-Jabu, which is great for defeating electrified enemies. Once you overcome the threats within the great fish and safely escape with Princess Ruto, you'll obtain the Zora's Sapphire (Ruto claims it's an engagement ring) and come one step closer to stopping Ganondorf's ambitions.

HEY, LISTEN!

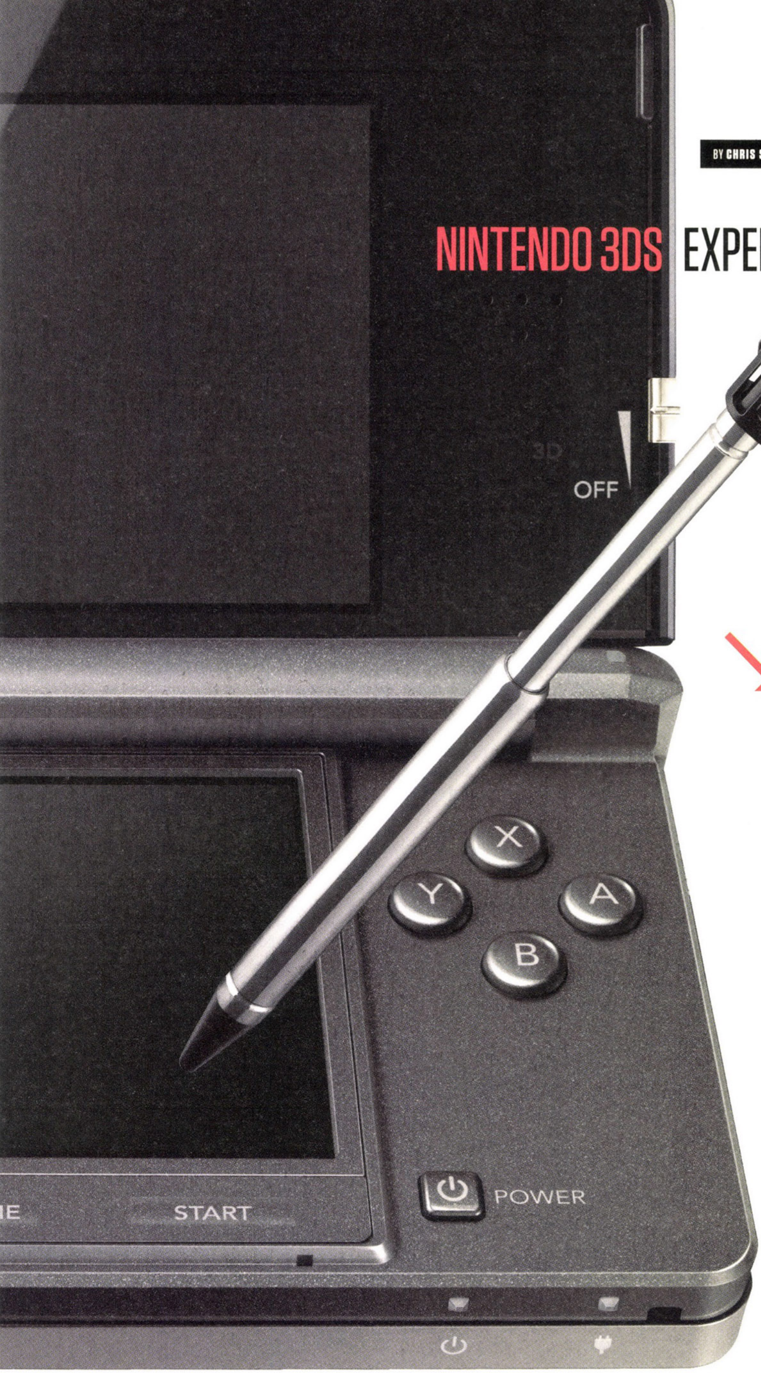
Anyone who's played Ocarina of Time before knows that the adventure is only beginning. After acquiring all three Spiritual Stones, a twist of fate causes Link's story to pick up seven years later, the boy hero now grown into a young man. In a notably changed world, adult Link will continue his quest—riding on horseback, gaining new items (including a bow, a hammer, and the ever-popular Hookshot), fighting fiercer monsters, encountering new characters (such as the enigmatic Sheik), and traveling to exotic locations ranging from watery depths to the heart of a fiery volcano to the sands of a mysterious desert.

Though the journey is one that many players have been on before, the lush visuals, updated controls, and stellar 3D effects almost make the game feel like a brand-new experience. Additional features promise to make the acclaimed adventure accessible even to those who've never played a Zelda game before, while veterans can look forward to advanced challenges such as Master Quest mode (a remixed, more difficult version of the game that was previously included with Ocarina of Time's GameCube release).

If you played the N64 version back in the day, The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time 3D will let you relive those memories with modern technology, and if you didn't, this version provides the perfect excuse to see what you've been missing. Get ready, heroes: the first must-have game for the Nintendo 3DS is almost here.

BY **CHRIS SLATE + THE NINTENDO POWER STAFF**

NINTENDO 3DS EXPERT USER'S GUIDE



Want to get the most out of your nifty new Nintendo 3DS? The handheld heroes at Nintendo Power are here to help.

As every new Nintendo 3DS owner quickly finds out, the system is packed with an incredible amount to see, do, and discover before you even put in a game card. In the time that we've spent tinkering around with our units here at Nintendo Power HQ (which has eaten up many more work hours than advisable), we've learned a lot about how the built-in software works and uncovered a few fun secrets. Most N3DS users will know at least some of what we're about to tell you, but we're betting that only a few will have discovered every one of our pearls of wisdom. So read on, try our tips and recommendations, and impress your friends with ninja-level Nintendo 3DS knowledge.

5 FIRST THINGS TO DO

Before we get to the advanced stuff, let's make sure that everyone has the basics covered. Here to tell you the first five things that any new Nintendo 3DS owner should try is none other than the man who oversaw the creation of the handheld (along with nintendogs + cats and the upcoming N3DS Mario Kart), famed Nintendo producer Hideki Konno.

1. First, I want you to create a Mii using the Mii Maker.

2. Next would be to set up your StreetPass communication data in the StreetPass Mii Plaza and take a look at what's in there.

3. Then, open up some AR games so you can get a feeling of how we vary augmented-reality technology with Nintendo 3DS technology.

4. Number four would be Face Raiders because it incorporates use of the system's gyro sensor, and it's a new and unique way to play.

5. And then number five would be the camera. I feel bad for not having any of our software titles in the top-five lineup—I kind of want to slide one in there between one and two. [Laughs] If this list went to six, I'd leave it as a blank slot for software.

Free Fishing

EXTRA AR GAMES AND NOVELTIES

Play enough of the initial AR offerings and you'll earn the opportunity to buy more with Play Coins. Here is what's available:

Take pictures! (1 Play Coin)
Press L and R to take pictures during any AR game.

Clock (1 Play Coin)
Move the hands of the clock to make a bird pop out at the top of every hour.

Globe (1 Play Coin)
There's not much to do with this miniature Earth except look at it, shoot it, or pose with it for a photo.

3D Tools (1 Play Coin)
With the stylus, draw on the touch screen to raise or lower parts of the environment using the camera.

Fish Gallery (1 Play Coin)
This gallery keeps track of the fish you've caught and gives hints to help find the ones you're missing.

Free Fishing (3 Play Coins)
With no time limit, you can go after rare fish to fill out your Fish Gallery.

Archery 2 (3 Play Coins)
This is a harder version of the initial Archery game, with all-new stages.

AR Shot 2 (3 Play Coins)
This is a harder version of the initial AR Shot game, with all-new stages.

Mii COLLECTING

Making Mii characters is more fun than ever thanks to several new enhancements. Anyone who's made even one Mii on a Nintendo 3DS likely knows of the big additions—new Mii parts and the ability to kick-start the process with a photo of your face—so we'll skip past those (although it should be noted that the new parts—along with the added ability to stretch and squish elements such as eyes—give Mii creators new tools to get tricky with).

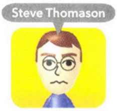
Our favorite new function is the ability to share your Mii characters with the world by turning them into QR codes that can be scanned off of paper, a computer monitor, or even the screen of another Nintendo 3DS. You simply need to select the QR Code option in the Mii Maker and then follow the onscreen steps to either create your own code or scan one from someone else. Loads of Mii QR codes have begun to pop up all over the Internet, including codes for top-notch celebrity lookalikes. Watching a Mii leap out of a QR code and onto your system's screen is pretty magical, and collecting cool Mii characters is more fun and addictive than we would have thought. You can also add any Mii that you've met in the StreetPass Mii Plaza by importing them into the Mii Maker, or transfer any of your old favorite Mii characters from Wii to N3DS.

OFFICIAL Mii QR CODES

Here are a few QR codes to get your collection started, courtesy of the NP team and a very special guest from Nintendo of America:

Chris Slate

Steve Thomason



Chris Hoffman

Justin Cheng

John Gilman

Cody Martin

Reggie Fils-Aime

STREETPASS STRATEGIES

Here at NP, StreetPass has proven to be one of our favorite N3DS functions. Of course, our office is abnormally suited to this feature since so many of us carry systems around—we suggest trying malls, concerts, conventions, public transit, or other places with large crowds if you're looking to make connections—but whether you tag people every day or only occasionally, there's a lot in store for those who stick with it. From earning in-game currency (in Ridge Racer 3D and LEGO Star Wars) to figurine battles (in Super Street Fighter IV 3D Edition) to swapping pooch presents (in nintendogs + cats), many games reward those who use StreetPass. So far the most compelling reasons to carry your system with you lie in the StreetPass Mii Plaza, where you greet the Mii characters of those you've tagged and participate in two addictive activities: Puzzle Swap and Find Mii. Here are a few tips to get ahead in those modes and make the most of every Mii you meet.

Leveling Up in Find Mii

Each time you tag the same Mii character, it gains a level in Find Mii (with level seven being the max) and its attacks and spells become stronger. Since it would take forever to win with only low-level CPU drones (purchased with Play Coins), it pays to revisit spots where the same Mii characters can be tagged repeatedly (such as game stores, where you can find clerks who may own Nintendo 3DS systems—or even N3DS demo kiosks populated with Mii characters). Progressing through the stages in Find Mii earns you up to 16 hats that can be worn in StreetPass Mii Plaza and that will appear on your Mii when it visits anyone you've tagged. The mode must be completed twice to collect all of the hats.

Speed Through

As in the Find Mii game (in which this tip is given), you can hold the R Button to fast-forward through any aspect of the StreetPass Mii Plaza, which removes any possible tedium from the repetitive scenes of welcoming new arrivals, collecting their puzzle pieces, etc.

Dogs or Cats?

In Find Mii, CPU heroes hired with Play Coins will initially appear as cats, but if you switch your pet preference to dogs in your Mii character's profile, your feline fighters will be replaced with canine combatants.

Play Coin Pointers

Most folks should easily be able to fit in the 1,000 steps needed to earn the daily maximum of 10 Play Coins (if you're in a hurry, simply hold the system and lightly shake it at a jogger's pace), but each coin is still precious to those looking to unlock game content, earn hats in Find Mii, or complete the seven puzzles in Puzzle Swap (Metroid: Other M, Mario and Bowser, Super Mario Galaxy 2, The Legend of Zelda, Kirby's Dream Land, Pikmin, and New Super Mario Bros. Wii). Here are three points to keep in mind when deciding how to spend your digital loot:

1. First unlock every extra in the AR games, since all eight of them can be had for less than two days' worth of Play Coins. The three advanced game modes—Archery 2, AR Shot 2, and Free Fishing—are an especially good value with challenging levels that are fun to show to friends.

2. Since purchased puzzle pieces are random and you can get the same ones multiple times, your coins are best spent on puzzles that have a lot of empty spaces; you'll just be throwing away most of your coins if you try to fill the final few gaps. Picking the exact pieces you need from those you've tagged is a much more efficient way of finishing a puzzle. And if you tag someone who has a piece that unlocks a new puzzle, take it! You never know when you might get another chance.

3. Hired heroes can get you through the first half of Find Mii, but they deal barely any damage to the ghosts in later stages. If you regularly tag even a couple of other Mii characters that you can level up, save your Play Coins unless you are in need of a hero with a certain color of shirt to progress.

GAME GUIDANCE

The fledgling Nintendo 3DS library already boasts some very good games, and we've handpicked the very best titles, each of which is worthy to kick-start any new N3DS owner's collection.

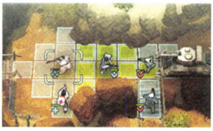
Super Street Fighter IV 3D Edition

Classic Street Fighter action, abundant modes and features, and standard-setting graphics make this a surefire showstopper.

2D image of Nintendo 3DS game

Pilotwings Resort

Nintendo's premier first-party title makes brilliant use of 3D visuals, and offers missions that are easy to enjoy but murder to master.



Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Shadow Wars

This game is the best surprise of the Nintendo 3DS launch, with deep and satisfying tactical play and a great use of 3D.

Ridge Racer 3D

Fans of the popular arcade-style racing series know what's in store; get set for frenzied, fast-paced arcade fun.

THIS AND THAT

These remaining tips and tactics don't fit into any overarching category but are some of our favorites. Be sure to check 'em out!

Super Spin

Anyone who has used a Nintendo 3DS will know that when you highlight a game or other software on the Home menu, its corresponding graphic on the top screen slowly spins. But were you aware that the speed of its spin is determined by how much noise the system's microphone picks up? Try making a racket (or to be less annoying, simply blow into the mic) to send the onscreen graphics into a superspeed spin.

When Landing a Plane...

The Pilotwings Resort manual holds a key piece of information for anyone looking to nail a perfect plane landing. From the moment you touch down on the water, don't move the Circle Pad, or points will be deducted from your accuracy rating. Since many players skip game manuals, we figured this was worth highlighting.

Secret DS Screen Setting

By default, DS games are stretched to fill the higher-resolution screen of the Nintendo 3DS, but if you're a stickler for pixel-perfect graphics, you can hold down the Select Button while loading a DS game from the Home menu to switch to the DS system's native resolution.

DS Games Love the Circle Pad.

The smooth action of the Circle Pad improves the control in some DS games, most notably Super Mario 64 DS. Although you don't get true analog control (the Circle Pad registers only the same eight directions as the DS system's Control Pad), it's still much easier to, for example, run Mario around in circles.

Take a Seat

When playing a game that utilizes the Nintendo 3DS system's motion and gyro sensors (such as AR Shot and the Periscope Strike mode of Steel Diver), it really helps to be seated in a chair that swivels, such as most office chairs. By using your feet to move in a full 360-degree circle, it's easy to keep the top half of your body still and the 3D effect of the top screen crisply in view.

×01
×01
×05
00:25:20

2D image of Nintendo 3DS game

Hidden Game & Watch Game

When using the Nintendo 3DS Sound software to play any MP3 or AAC file on your SD memory card, cycle through the built-in visualizers until you reach the one styled after classic Nintendo Game &Watch games. Simply move the Circle Pad in any direction and you will take control of the action and play a real game in which you must move from side to side and forward and backward to keep a ball bouncing in the air. The game pauses when your song ends, but will continue the moment another tune starts up. The game even saves your high score so that you can keep trying to top it.

You can also take limited control of other visualizers, such as causing the space ship to shoot lasers. Although this isn't really a game, it can still be pretty fun to blast along with the beats.

AR TRICKS

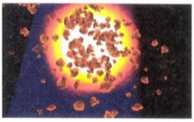
True to form, the devilish developers at Nintendo have peppered the AR games with several secrets to discover. While these might not be the most titanic of tricks, each is worth trying at least once. (If you snap funny photos of giant Mii characters, send them in!)

Freaky Fishing

When playing the Free Fishing AR game, you can attract special fish by placing the AR Card on certain-colored surfaces. Blue calls forth a school of common sardines, but red reveals Cheep-Cheeps and green gets you Koopa shells (both from the Mario series). Yellow snags you Mr. AR, the yellow box that represents the AR games.

Cuckoo Crash

In the unlockable Clock AR extra, the bird will appear in two different incarnations: a cuckoo and a chicken. Even better, the bird will "smash" into your screen if you get too close—a nice effect in 3D. If you make the poor little guy bash his head against your screen over and over, he will be replaced with an indestructible metallic bird.



Blow Up the World

If you keep shooting the globe with a rapid, relentless barrage of blasts, it will explode. It's quite a shocking sight if you don't see it coming, but the bad news is that the globe is permanently broken and you have to drop another Play Coin to buy a new one.

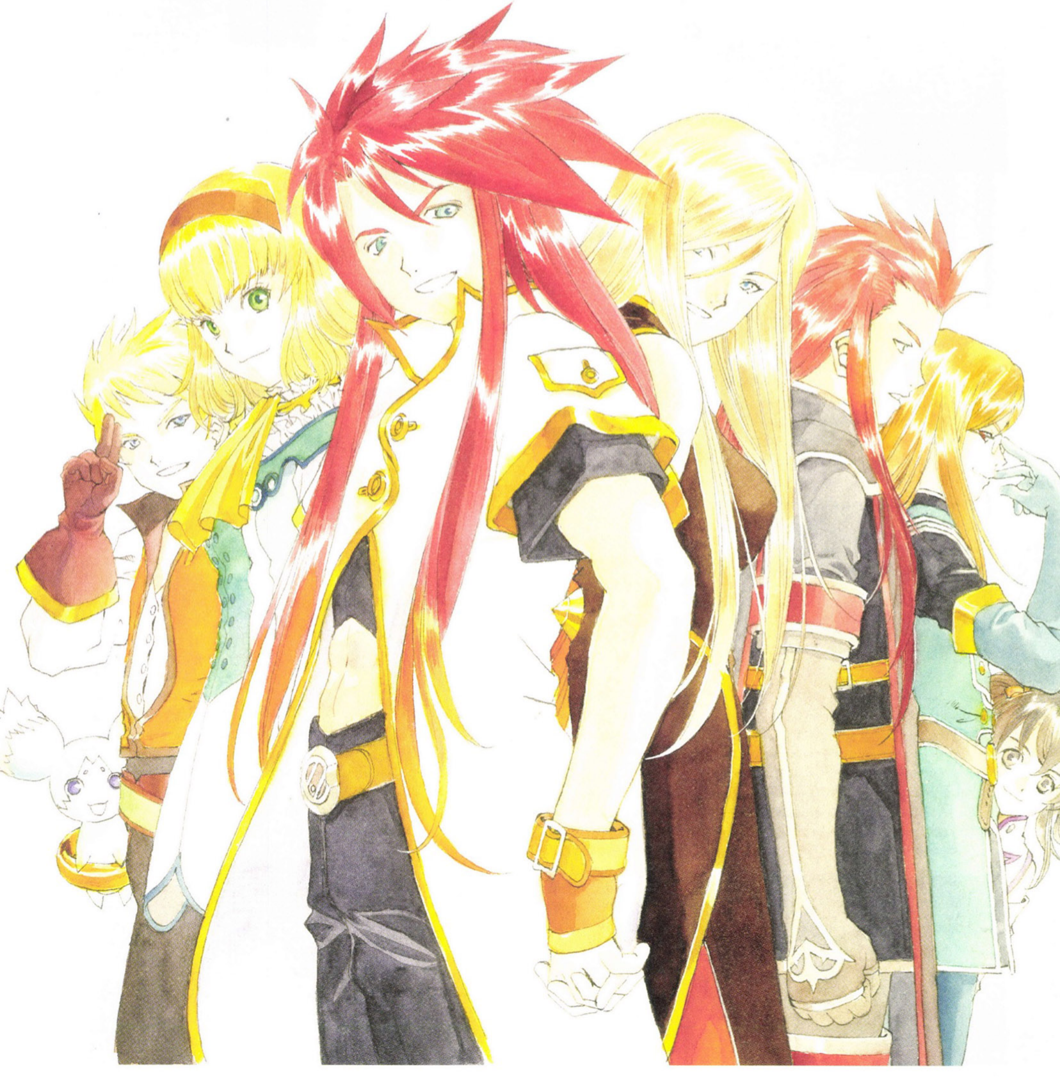
Super-Size It!

If you blow up the size of your AR Cards, the corresponding AR games or Mii characters will appear that much bigger on your N3DS screen. (You may have to hold the system farther away to fit the full scene onto the screen.) The easiest way to get bigger cards is to download the official AR Card images from the Nintendo 3DS support section of www.nintendo.com and then print them out large, but a copy machine will do in a pinch.

Go Crazy with Cards

Who said that you have to always place your AR Cards on a table? Part of the fun is in finding ridiculous places to play your AR games or to snap AR photos. Less-stable environments obviously won't be the best choices for serious gameplay, but watching a dragon burst out of a buddy's chest is its own kind of entertainment.

The modern RPG classic **Tales of the Abyss** is about to be retold on the Nintendo 3DS. Yes, even in America!



Back from the Abyss

TALES-SERIES PRODUCER Makoto Yoshizumi has long wanted to do a handheld remake of Tales of the Abyss. Though the game is only five years old, Tales fans have always ranked it as one of the best in the series, and its story and characters have been steadily winning new fans through popular anime and manga adaptations. But there was one problem: none of the last generation of portable game systems were capable of a near-perfect port of a PlayStation 2 game. "We knew that if we were going to port it to a new platform, we wanted it to be equal to or even better than the original game, and really bring out its full potential," Yoshizumi explains. "The Nintendo 3DS finally solved all those issues and provided just the opportunity we were looking for." Not only did the platform have the power to bring the game back to life without any significant graphical compromises, but its 3D capabilities offered a way to add an impressive new feature without having to mess too much with the underlying game. From battles to dungeons to event scenes, Yoshizumi's team was able to remaster the entire game into 3D (save for the handful of animated cut-scenes) in less than a year.

BY CASEY LOE

PUBLISHER: NAMCO BANDAI DEVELOPER: NAMCO TALES STUDIO RELEASE: FALL 2011

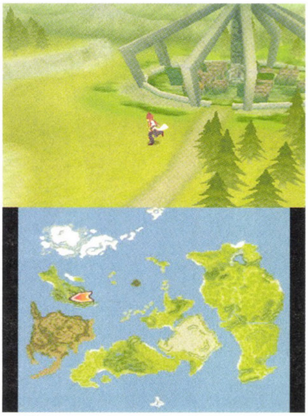
N3DS

And let's face it—Tales of the Abyss doesn't just *deserve* a remake—it kinda *needs* one. Although the game won well-deserved praise for its story and battle system, even its most fervent fans admit that on a technical level it was a bit of a mess. The original PS2 version has atrocious load times, going to a black screen for four or five seconds every time a player enters a new area, even just different rooms within the same building. The game's frame rate takes a dive whenever players leave town to travel via the world map, despite the fact that the world map doesn't even look great. And while the game has an impressive localization featuring professional anime voice actors, the English-version producers sought to save a few bucks by not voicing the series's trademark "skits," in which the game's cast engages in amusing repartee or provides a little more background on the game's world and story.

The move to the Nintendo 3DS system will at least remedy the most egregious of those failings. Yoshizumi promises, "Rest assured that we were able to cut down on load times significantly, thanks to using the N3DS Game Card in place of optical media." We're also optimistic that the move to a new platform will lead to a steadier frame rate throughout, although Yoshizumi declined to comment on that specifically. Unfortunately, however, we can confirm that the skits will remain unvoiced in the Nintendo 3DS version; Namco Bandai has no plans to reunite the game's original cast. But two out of three ain't bad, and with those technical impediments out of the way, it should be a whole lot easier for players to get into Tales of Abyss's otherwise excellently realized world.

KNOWING THE SCORE

Yoshizumi remembers Tales of the Abyss as a game in which every aspect of the narrative just came together beautifully. "Personally I feel that in terms of world-building, story, and character design, Tales of the Abyss is one of the deepest and most fulfilling games in the entire series," he muses. "I'm also really happy with the way that, while working within a fantasy-world setting,

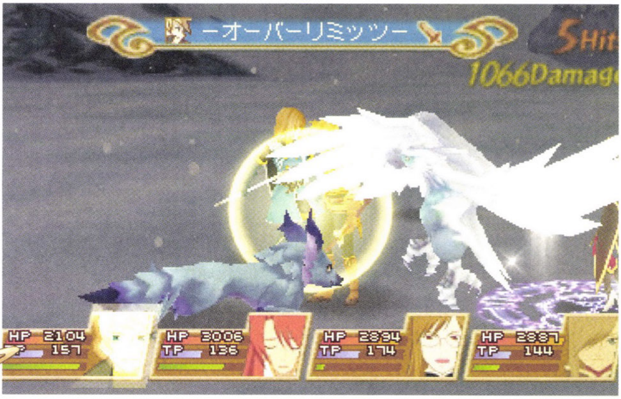


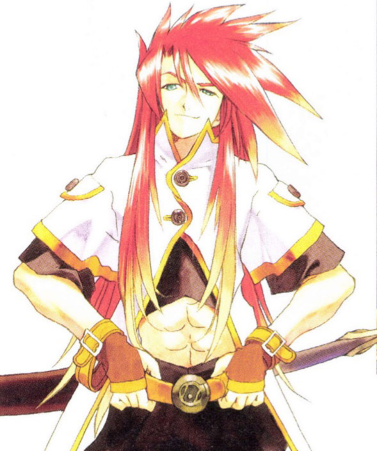
[Below] In combat, characters can trigger an "Overlimit" that reduces the damage they receive and stops foes from knocking them off balance.

LUKE FON FABRE

The sole heir to a politically important dukedom, Luke fon Fabre was kidnapped by an enemy nation in his childhood, a traumatic experience that left him with devastating headaches and no memory of the first 10 years of his life. Since then, his family has kept him under heavy guard in their mansion. His sheltered life gave him plenty of time for sword training, but left him poorly socialized, clueless about world politics and—*ahem*—hopelessly confused about what amount of midriff is appropriate to reveal in public. Luke's comrades find his arrogance and self-absorption insufferable, but have little choice but to put up with him, as circumstances have made him an important player in world events.

Like most Tales heroes, Luke wields a sword and hits hard, if not necessarily fast. An affinity for a wide variety of Fonons makes him the top beneficiary of the game's Field of Fonons system.





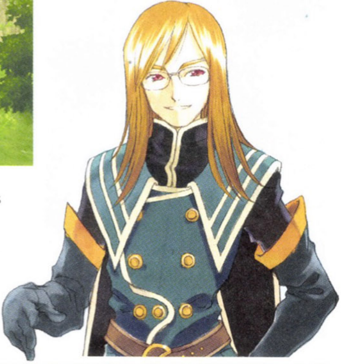
ルーク
仕方ねえだろ。
金払うなんて知らなかったんだから

the story was able to tackle a lot of modern-day issues. That's a recurring theme in all of the 'Tales of' games." There's aren't many Tales fan who would disagree with his assessment. Tales of the Abyss's unusual emphasis on the cast's negative traits and neuroses gleefully shattered the typical "buddies on a grand adventure" JRPG paradigm. Players take the role of a sheltered and self-absorbed hero joined by a group of oddballs who were thrust together by circumstance and have little patience or affection for each other. Obviously, the characters grow and evolve over the course of the game's lengthy quest, but with an exceptional voice cast and strong translation successfully capturing the game's bitter sense of humor, the incessant

JADE CURTISS

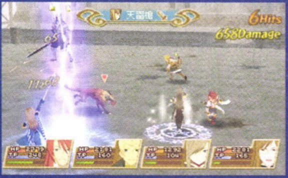
Jade is a colonel in one of the world's mightiest militaries, and an ally of necessity for Luke's party. Jade is erudite, cunning, impeccably refined and, on the surface, quite pleasant. But his eerily perfect emotional control and so-dry-that-you-never-know-if-he's-mocking-you sense of humor suggest something far darker underneath. He's an amiable enough guy, but so was Hannibal Lecter.

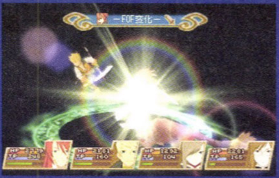
In combat, Jade is pure offense, alternating between powerful spear attacks and offensive long-range spells. His combat abilities do not include raising the dead, which suggests he earned the nickname, "Jade the Necromancer," under far murkier circumstances.

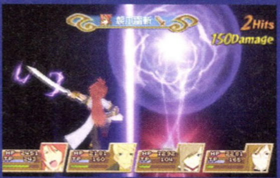


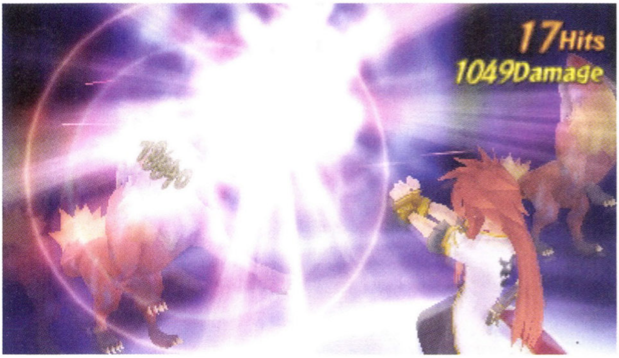
Hooked on Fonics

Every Tales-series battle system has its own little twists, but few have proven as popular as The Field of Fonons in Tales of the Abyss. Whenever a character uses an elementally...er, Fonically charged spell or special attack, it leaves behind a pool of that Fonon. Continuing to hit that area of the battlefield with that Fonon will strengthen the pool, until it's a full-on Field of Fonon. At that point, characters who use certain special abilities or spells while standing within the field can deliver unusually powerful effects as their attacks pick up the Fonon of the field. Suddenly a wimpy swipe can trigger a barrage of thunderbolts, or a healing spell can send pillars of ice flying into nearby foes. The Tales series has been criticized for being "button-mashy," but mechanics like these allow more strategically minded players to put their whole party to work setting up clever tactics instead of relying on fighting game-style reflexes.







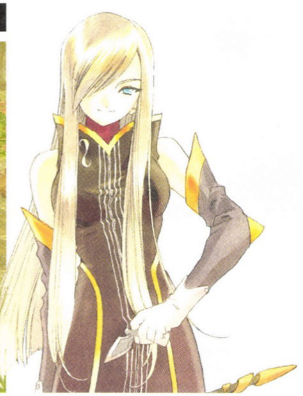


[Above] It's safe to assume that this flashy Mystic Arte will look stunning in 3D.

TEAR GRANTS

An orphan raised as a warrior by a militant wing of the world's dominant religion, Tear is focused enough on her mission to put up with Luke's bad attitude. Intelligent, perceptive, and conservative in dress and manner, she acts as both the voice of reason and the scolding mother of the group. Her original mission is to assassinate Luke's master of arms—her own brother—but she quickly ends up entangled in a much deeper plot.

Tear is a spellcaster focusing on the rarest of the seven Fonons, which allows her to cast a wide range of healing and offensive spells and to create pools of Fonon energy on the battlefield for other characters to exploit.



bickering and backbiting makes for a memorable and oddly likable cast.

The game's core story finds its root in a flavorful mythology based on Fonons, six core elements that compose the known universe and can be commanded by spellcasting Fonists. In the world's recent history, a seventh Fonon (of sound) was discovered, which allowed the world's dominant religion to begin reading the musical score that underlies the universe. As the score includes accurate prophecies of the world's future, its discovery dramatically destabilized the relationships between the nations of the world, spurring a cutthroat competition to gain and control access to news of the future. The musical underpinnings to the game's mythology gives the whole experience a unique flavor, with Seventh Fonists casting spells via song and plot points hinging on the fingerprint-like uniqueness of the musical resonances emitted by each character in the world.

SETTING THE MOLD

A great cast and story are far from the only legacy left by Tales of the Abyss. The game also brought free 3D movement into the Tales series's real-time combat for the first time, creating the template for the battle system that has been used in every console entry in the series since. (While Tales of Symphonia featured battles in 3D environments, players could move only in relation to a locked-on enemy.) The ability to move freely added a great deal of depth to the battle system, allowing players to react quickly to foil enemy spellcasters or lead aggressive enemies on a merry chase around the battlefield while comrades attack them from afar. There are plenty of other cool combat mechanics, and a clever system of equippable skills allows players to configure them to their lik-

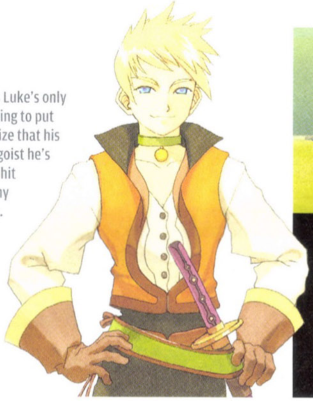
ガイ

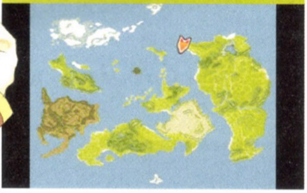
ルーク！ また例の頭痛か？

GUY CECIL

A servant in the fon Fabre manor, easygoing Guy is Luke's only true friend. Obedient and eager to please, he's willing to put up with anything from Luke, and has begun to realize that his infinite tolerance has helped make Luke into the egoist he's become. Naturally graceful and suave, Guy is a big hit with the ladies—but is pathologically terrified of any physical contact with members of the opposite sex. Naturally, his party members miss no opportunity to torment him for it.

Probably the most fun character to control in combat, Guy is quick and versatile, fighting with a sword in one hand and a scabbard in the other. He has a wide assortment of special attacks that are easy to combo together, but his only real spells are for boosting his own combat prowess.





ing on a character-by-character basis, strengthening certain mechanics or removing them entirely. As is typical of the Tales series, with a party of four acting in real time and plenty of flashy effects, the battles can become chaotic quite quickly. It will be interesting to see if the addition of stereoscopic 3D will make it easier to keep track of where characters are in relation to each other and assess the efficacy of area-effect spells.

Outside of combat, the original Tales of the Abyss was packed with interesting features. Its entire world was linked in a global economy that allowed players to lower prices by performing side quests that boosted the prosperity levels of various towns, or corner the market in certain goods and sell them at distant towns for a hefty profit. The dungeons were especially heavy with puzzles, often revolving around the abilities of Mieu, the party sidekick, to shoot fireballs, smash through rubble, or fly up to higher ledges. These mechanics added a welcome hint of The Legend of Zelda to the series's usually straightforward dungeon-exploration segments (a hint that unfortunately hasn't been seen much since). The game also features its own take on the Tales franchise's trademark mechanics: cooking, titles, character customization, and so on. While the focus may be on the narrative, there's a lot of depth both on and off the battlefield.

NO FRILLS NECESSARY

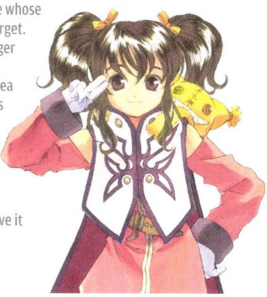
Previous Tales-series remakes have featured new content in the form of characters, dungeons, and even playable epilogue chapters, but the 3D visuals are the only significant addition to the Nintendo 3DS version of Tales of the Abyss. Yoshizumi explains why: "Tales of the Abyss

鋭招来
5Hits
1340Damage
452
749
430
650
650
HP 2280 TP 133
HP 1765 TP 228
HP 2742 TP 223
HP 1868 TP 220

ANISE TATLIN

Anise is only 13 years old, but somehow landed a gig as the private bodyguard of Fon Master Ion, a popelike religious figure whose powers of prophecy make him a frequent kidnapping target. (Oh, video games! Is there anything that a plucky teenager can't accomplish?) When Anise's mission leads her to cooperate with Luke's party, she falls in love with the idea of marrying the fabulously rich Luke, and quickly worms her way into the group. Anise seems upbeat and giggly, but her cheerful exterior hides a passion for manipulation and some pretty serious rage issues.

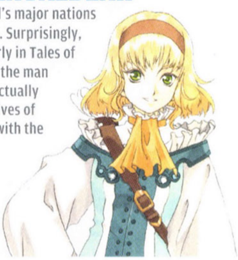
Anise can cast both offensive and defensive spells, but her primary mode of attack is the use of her puppetry skills to manipulate a giant stuffed animal and have it pummel her foes in combat. She's an odd one for sure.

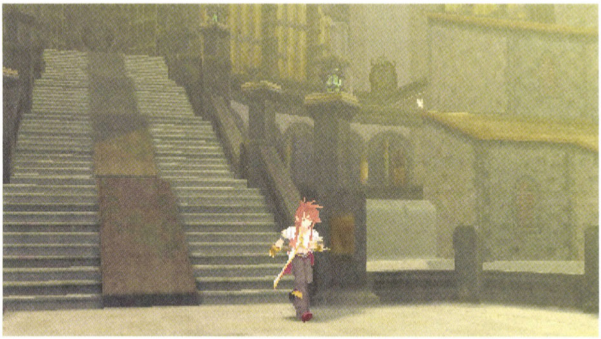


NATALIA LUZU KIMLASCA-LANVALDEAR

Bossy, haughty Natalia is the princess of one of the world's major nations and has been betrothed to Luke for almost her entire life. Surprisingly, she seems OK with this, and upon reuniting with Luke early in Tales of the Abyss, immediately commences henpecking him into the man she wants him to be. Natalia comes off as a snob, but is actually one hell of a princess, fighting tirelessly to improve the lives of her subjects even as she's berating Luke for associating with the lowborn members of his party.

In combat, Natalia fulfills dual roles as the party's archer and healer. She's always a nice character to switch to when you just want to sit back and direct the party's efforts from afar.





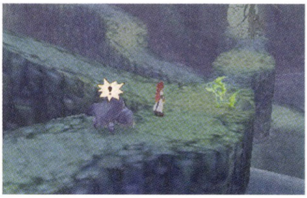
already feels like a fully realized game to me, and I worried that cramming in new features just for the sake of having them might detract from the game's fundamental strengths. Of course, as a creator, there's always the feeling that we'd like to just keep adding more and more, but this time we're letting the game stand on its own."

Still, the move to Nintendo 3DS has brought a few unexpected perks. In addition to offering 3D visuals, the system's upper screen provides a widescreen aspect ratio that makes event scenes and overworld areas feel a bit more cinematic and gives the battles a little more room to breathe. Then there's the touch screen, which fills useful roles in each of the game's modes, offering a world map during exploration scenes and, more significantly, four user-editable shortcut buttons during combat. By tapping a segment of the touch screen, you can make your playable character execute additional actions beyond the ones you've assigned to button combinations, or order party members to support you with preset spells without having to pause the game and select them from a menu.

The lack of new big-ticket additions may be a disappointment for longtime fans, but it won't be a big concern for the game's target audience of first-time Abyss players. And that's a market that is, unfortunately for the series, huge. After Tales of Symphonia made a big splash on the GameCube in 2004, Namco Bandai began focusing their development on the PlayStation 2, with tragic results in the West. Tales of the Abyss had a miserably disappointing launch, harmed by both the bad taste left by the poorly received Tales of Legendia (released earlier in the same year) and crushing competition from Final Fantasy XII, which shipped only two weeks later.

Fortunately, the launch of the Nintendo 3DS has given Namco Bandai an easy opportunity for a do-over. Instead of Tales of the Abyss again facing brutal competition, its scheduled fall 2011 release will likely make it the only major Nintendo 3DS RPG of the year. And with the game offering well over 60 hours of content, it's as fulfilling a meal as Nintendo 3DS owners are likely to find any time soon. The best part is, unlike such remakes as, say, Final Fantasy III on the original Nintendo DS, Tales of the Abyss doesn't rely upon nostalgia. It was a fairly recent game and one that was well ahead of its time, so it looks and feels as contemporary now as it did five years ago. With everything lining up in its favor, this may finally be the Tales game that grabs a substantial audience—and drags them into the abyss.

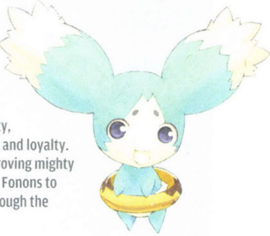
[Below] No random encounters here; you can avoid foes or you can knock them away with Mieu Attacks.

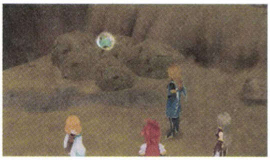


MIEU

Mieu is a Cheagle, a sentient, forest-dwelling species that is considered to be sacred. But Mieu stumbled across the Tales series's iconic Sorcerer's Ring item, and accidentally used it to burn down his forest, earning a lifelong banishment from his tribe. With nowhere else to go, Mieu joined Luke's party, where he repays Luke's constant abuse with heartfelt affection and loyalty.

Mieu doesn't participate in combat, but makes up for it by proving mighty handy off the battlefield. His Sorcerer's Ring can be charged by Fonons to unlock a variety of powers that are essential to progressing through the game's puzzle-filled dungeons.





Reflections from the Abyss

Tales-series producer Makoto Yoshizumi muses about what made Tales of the Abyss so special, the challenges of doing the Nintendo 3DS port, and how Namco Bandai's localization strategy has evolved.

NINTENDO POWER **We're overjoyed to see the Tales series returning to the West with Tales of the Abyss for N3DS and Tales of Graces F. How has your approach to the localization of the series changed over the last few years?**

MAKOTO YOSHIZUMI Japanese RPGs have a huge amount of text that requires a lot of time to localize. And not just time, of course, but money as well. We've tried taking steps on our end to try and alleviate this problem, and we're starting to see results. Hopefully, we can now look forward to seeing more games in the "Tales of" series being enjoyed by a worldwide audience.

After so many years, what do you find to be your favorite aspects of the original version of Tales of the Abyss?

I really enjoy watching the characters evolve over the course of the game's fast-paced story, and the gradual reveals of everyone's backstory. I'm also really satisfied with the way the battles have the depth of a great action game, but without requiring overly complicated controls. I think both of these elements combine to bring players a great experience.

Did you encounter any unexpected challenges in the process of porting Abyss to the Nintendo 3DS handheld?

I can only speak from the experience of working on the Japanese version of the game, but there ended up being a lot more spoken dialogue than expected, and it was a pain having to compress the voice data without negatively impacting the game. All in all, though, we feel like we achieved a high-quality piece of work.

How do the 3D features in the Nintendo 3DS version change the game experience?

Every part of the game, with the exception of the animated cut-scenes, has been redone in 3D. I think this makes the game's world feel more real than it did in the original version. In the battle scenes, in particular, the 3D allows players to feel a level of immersion that they've probably never experienced before.

Did you have to compromise on any aspects of the original PS2 version to make it work on the Nintendo 3DS?

We had to rebuild all of the 3D character models to conform to the rendering performance of the Nintendo 3DS. But besides that, nearly ever other aspect of the game ported over seamlessly.

Have you made any changes to the nuts and bolts of the game itself, such as rebalancing enemies or adding new weapons or Artes?

We did make some adjustments to various in-game parameters, but only to compensate for the differences in controls in the N3DS version of the game. We didn't add any new weapons or Artes.

Will players be able to play the battles co-op over a wireless connection? Are any online, StreetPass, or SpotPass features planned?

We don't plan to include any communication features.

Tales of Symphonia and Tales of Graces have both had storyline sequels in Dawn of the New World and Tales of Graces F, respectively. Have you ever considered making a sequel to Tales of the Abyss?

Of course we have! We've had plenty of discussions with Tales of the Abyss scriptwriter Takumi Miyajima about a possible sequel to the story. However, we don't yet have anything that would suffice as a complete game storyline.

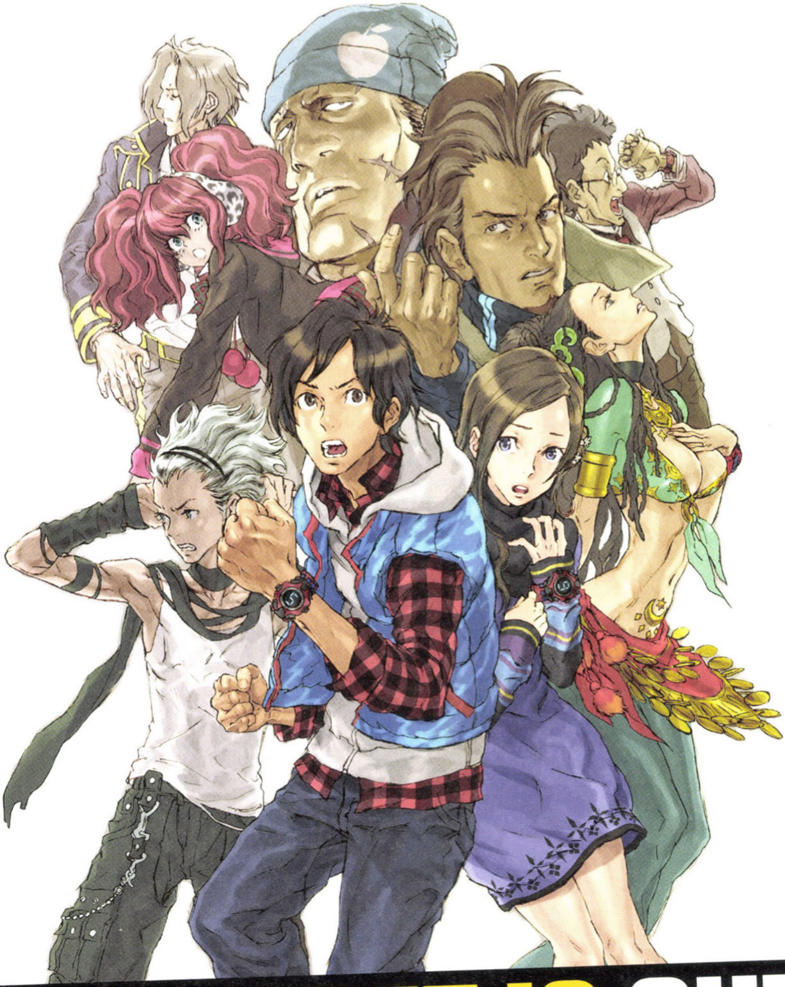
At the time of this interview, Tales of Graces F has been announced for Western release, but no platform has been specified. Is there any hope for a release of the Wii version?

You will be hearing more about Tales of Graces F very soon.

Do you have any final comments for our readers?

I get a lot of comments from "Tales of" fans from all over the world on my Twitter account. I get a lot of compliments and encouragement, but I also get a lot of fans expressing their frustrations about "Tales of" games not being localized for their country. Reading their comments sometimes makes me happy and sometimes gives me a lot to think about. There are so many game ideas I have that I wish everyone could experience, and my staff is very much looking forward to working on them. Keep your eyes peeled for more of the "Tales of" series!

ジェイド
ザオ遺跡……2000年前の
あのザオ遺跡のことでしょうか

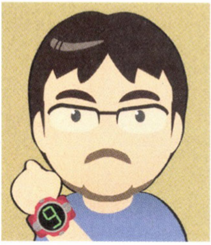


THE SECRET IS OUT

Long an overlooked genre, Japanese visuals novels—such as **Nine Hours, Nine Persons, Nine Doors**—are reaching more players in the western world. Could this be the dawn of a new era for this unique breed of adventure? We tracked down 999 writer/director **Kotaro Uchikoshi** to find out.

High localization costs and a perception that Americans weren't interested in reading-focused games led Western publishers to shun Japan's popular graphic-text adventure games—also known as visual novels or digital comics—for decades. But everything changed in 2005, when Capcom decided to test the waters by commissioning a first-rate localization of Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney. The game was a surprise smash, consistently selling out for six months and ultimately shipping over 100,000 copies. Its success launched a powerful new franchise and transformed the Nintendo DS system into a hotbed of visual-novel experimentation. Localizations of games like Hotel Dusk: Room 215, Time Hollow, and Jake Hunter: Detective Chronicles soon followed, although no visual novel found quite so enthusiastic a reception until Aksys Games's late-2010 release of the M-rated Nine Hours, Nine Persons, Nine Doors (abbreviated as 999). In addition to winning universally positive reviews and several year-end awards (including the Story of the Year award from Nintendo Power), 999 proved an unlikely hit at retail. While Aksys Games won't reveal exact figures, localization editor Ben Bateman says the company is "definitely pleased" with its performance and reveals that the title is already on its fourth printing.

The game was originally developed by Chunsoft, arguably the most famous studio working in the genre. While the company has produced several visual novels that rank among Japan's most highly regarded games of all time, difficult-to-localize storylines and high production values (their games often feature filmed sequences with professional actors) have prevented Chunsoft from pursuing Western releases. But the company has made a significant strategic shift with 999, which may go down in history as the first Japanese visual novel ever developed specifically with an international audience in mind. As Chunsoft director Kotaro Uchikoshi reveals in our postmortem interview, it will not be the company's last.



NINTENDO POWER **As a writer who specializes in the genre, what do you view as the advantages and challenges on working in the visual-novel medium, as opposed to writing traditional novels or films?**

KOTARO UCHIKOSHI I'll start with the challenges. Visual novels have a lot of text, and people have a tendency to not like that. The large volume of text can make them hard to get into. Words are basically just a symbolic code, so it's a lot of work for the brain to decode words, and as a result reading can tire us out. Conversely, pictures and sounds are processed intuitively, so they're easier on the brain than some sort of code.

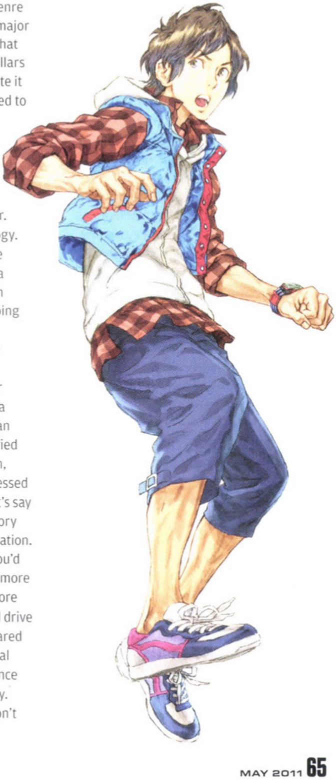
When a player steps into a game store, they're normally looking for "primitive pleasures," so it's highly unlikely that they would pick up a visual novel that can potentially tire them out. They're usually thinking, "Why should I pick up a game and get tired? I want to empty my mind and just play a simple game that I can enjoy...." It makes sense.

That's why I believe visual-novel games don't belong in a game store, but in a bookstore—although that might bother some of the game stores who like to sell my games, so perhaps I should rephrase it: game stores can certainly sell visual novels, but they should *also* be sold in bookstores. The visual-novel genre should not be fighting against major RPG/action-adventure games that developers spend billions of dollars on. It's a book, like a novel. I hate it when visual novels get compared to major RPG/action-adventure titles just because they're both games. There's no way to win at that. It's like a bantamweight boxer going up against a heavyweight boxer. Actually, that's a horrible analogy. It might be better to say they're a swimmer competing against a 100-meter runner. They're both "sports," but what's actually going on is completely different.

Now, all the challenges of the medium can also be seen as its advantages. Compared to other games, a visual novel can have a more in-depth story, and you can present it in a composed, dignified way. That's because, once again, words are an extremely compressed symbolic code. For example, let's say you take a certain amount of story and try to express it as 3D animation. Imagine the amount of space you'd need! Not only would it take up more space, you'd have to get a lot more people to create it, and that will drive the cost up. Additionally, compared to a normal (book) novel, a visual novel is easier to understand since you can understand it intuitively. When you read it, your brain won't tire out as much when it decodes it. I know, I know, that's the opposite of what I said earlier. But I was comparing the visual novel with other game genres. Compared to a book, though, it won't tire you out as much. Why? It's because there are pictures. There are background graphics, pictures of the props, lots of schematic illustrations, and most of all, you can see the characters. To top it off there's sound effects, music, and even voices for the characters, in some games. All of those can expand your world and make the story more immersive. In other words, a visual novel is easier to understand than a normal book, and it's also much easier to empathize with the character and become emotionally attached to the story.

How do you feel about being asked to explain the minutiae of your games' storylines? Would you prefer they stand on their own, with some mysteries left unexplained?

[Editor's note: Mr. Uchikoshi has



BY CASEY LOE

PUBLISHER: AKSYS GAMES DEVELOPER: CHUNSOFT RELEASE: NOVEMBER 2010 DS *answered scores of questions about 999's mysteries at www.aksysgames.com/999/answers.]*

That's a really hard question. Generally when a writer is asked to explain the minutiae, they lose. Because if you look deep into the question you can interpret it as, "I didn't really get it. What happened? Can you tell me?" If you made your readers feel that way, either you didn't have the ability to portray what you wanted to, or you got lazy, or you ran out of time. Whatever the case, it's still losing. Even if 99 out of 100 people understood what you wanted to portray, if there was one person that didn't get it, then you lost that one person.

Personally, I acknowledge my defeat and if anyone asks me to explain things, I try my best to answer them. Now, if someone asks why I didn't just make it obvious and easy to understand in the first place, then things get a little more complicated. I'm going to be blunt. If something is very, very entertaining, no one really cares if there are questions left over. That's because people come up with their own answer, or they discuss it amongst one another on forums and the answers just come up on their own. The more questions there are, the more people talk about it, and the mystery becomes the beauty of it.

Do you guys know an anime called *Evangelion*? After you watch it, you're left with a whole lot of questions, but no one ever really complains about that. Why? It's because Evangelion is so entertaining. It's that simple. On the other hand, if it's not that entertaining, then those questions and cliffhangers can be its downfall. That's why when someone asks you to explain your work, you've lost right there. Because it can mean "Your story wasn't fun at all."

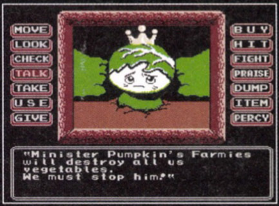
But even then, I write my stories with the intention that they will be extremely entertaining, so I like to leave questions behind. I mean, who knows: that mystery might eventually become the good part of the story. I guess in a sense, I'm taking a big risk.

Did you have an international audience in mind when you developed 999? If not, why did you avoid so many typical conventions of Japanese visual novels, such as school-aged characters, Japanese settings, and so on?

Yes, I did have an international audience in mind. However, the reason

GREAT MOMENTS IN VISUAL NOVELDOM

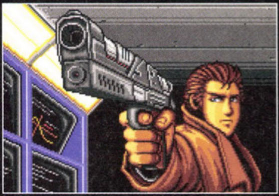
Visual novels have had to travel a long and bumpy road to reach even niche acceptance in the west. Below are a few of our favorite milestones in the mostly tragic history of the genre.



"Minister Pumpkin's Farmies will destroy all us vegetables. We must stop him!"

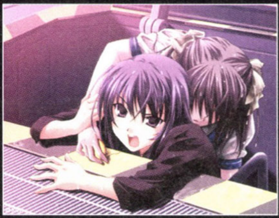
Princess Tomato in the Salad Kingdom (NES, 1991)

"One day, Minister Pumpkin betrayed King Broccoli." Who can forget the chilling words that kicked off what was arguably the first Japanese visual novel ever localized for a North American video game console? Inspired by Western adventure games like Shadowgate, Princess Tomato in the Salad Kingdom features a menu of 14 options such as Move, Look, and Hit that are your only tools for advancing the game's unforgettable story of vegetable-related political treachery.



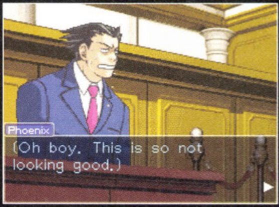
Snatcher (Sega CD, 1994)

Metal Gear creator Hideo Kojima revolutionized the visual novel genre in the late '80s with his gritty, violent sci-fi masterpiece, Snatcher. When a version of the game was later made for the Genesis system's Sega CD peripheral, Konami painstakingly localized it for Western audiences, but their efforts amounted to only a few thousand sales on the poorly received peripheral. The game is now considered a classic (and an extremely valuable one), but at the time, it was a catastrophic bomb that would haunt the genre for years.



Ever 17: Out of Infinity (PC, 2005)

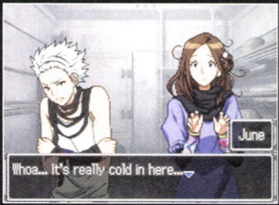
The most ambitious attempt to bring visual novels to the West came from a company known as Hirameki International, which localized over a dozen Japanese visual novels for PCs and DVD players under the AnimePlay label. Their most famous effort was Ever 17, the only other game by 999 writer Kotaro Uchikoshi to be officially localized into English. The game doesn't have any puzzles, but its twisty tale of seven heroes trapped in an underwater theme park shares several themes with 999. Sadly, the company canceled its AnimePlay line only a few months after its release, and copies of Ever 17 are now rare and valuable collector's items.



(Oh boy. This is so not looking good.)

Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney (DS, 2005)

Detective stories have always been a popular motif for visual novels, but Capcom's Phoenix Wright introduced a novel twist by featuring heroes who investigate crimes not to catch criminals, but to prove their guilt or innocence in trial. The combination of a quirky concept, memorable characters, and expert localization made for the genre's first breakout hit in the West and established the Nintendo DS as the ideal platform for visual novels.



Whoa... It's really cold in here...

Nine Hours, Nine Persons, Nine Doors (DS, 2010)

999 marked a bold return to the mature-rated, sci-fi suspense of games like Snatcher. Its story of nine people trapped in a murderous game features an elaborate mythology that is slowly revealed as players unlock more and more of the game's alternate endings. Breaking from the usual all-text formula of the genre, several dozen explorable puzzle rooms provide a welcome break from the densely plotted story.

why I didn't go the typical school-aged route wasn't because I had localization in mind. It was simply a code of ethics. In Japan (I guess maybe in the US as well?) it's really hard to release a game where students kill each other. It's not impossible, but it's not easy either. In 999, murder is a pretty important part of the story, so I made sure that I wouldn't have anyone under the age of 18. Oh, and in case you were wondering, Clover is 18 but she's graduated from high school.

Of course, when I put it that way, you might wonder if I actually wanted to have typical school-age characters in the first place. The truth is, I didn't. Quite the contrary, in fact. I sort of wanted to have a suave 40-year-old man be the main character. However, in Japan having an old dude as a protagonist isn't accepted widely for some reason. (Mario is a different story.) This is especially true in visual novels. No matter how hard we try, late 20s seems to be about as old as we can get.

My current secret wish is to someday write a story with an awesome middle-aged man or woman as the protagonist.

What do you make of the difference in reaction to 999 from international audiences? For example, the differences in favorite characters and the differences in questions you're asked about the storyline.

[Editor's note: This answer contains storyline spoilers.]

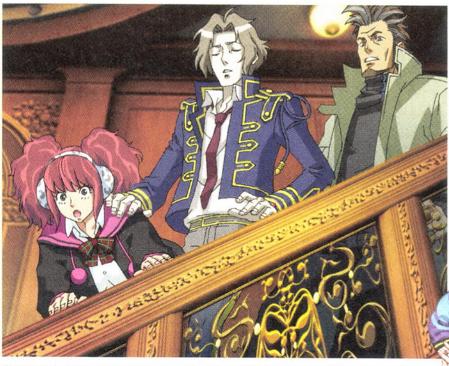
I answered some Q&A from American audiences a little while ago. If I remember correctly, a lot of the questions were about Akane. Most of them were like, "Is Akane really a bad person?" or, "Is she just pretending to be innocent and she's actually cruel?" In Japan, not too many people asked me about that. I think it was because the Japanese audience thought, "That's not even a question. There's no way she can be evil." Personally, I didn't intend for it to come across that way. The opposite, in fact. Well, actually I didn't want her to be pure evil, but I wanted to portray her as a cool-headed, intelligent girl who will do whatever it takes to achieve her goals. Doesn't that kind of girl just give you the chills?

Hopefully, 999's success will make it easier for games of this genre to be localized for Western audiences. Would you approach your game-development process any differently if you knew that were the case?

Oh no, no, I don't consider it a success yet. I'm really honored that you consider it a success. Of course I am aware that it has been receiving great reviews, and I appreciate that from the bottom of my heart, but I don't think that makes it a success. I guess I'm coming from a business standpoint. I really want even more US players to enjoy our games. Still, I am really happy that 999 has been accepted so well in the US. I think it was thanks to Aksys putting their hearts behind this title and its localization! I can honestly say that played a huge role.

Musicians and artists can use their own hands to communicate with people internationally. They are able to express themselves directly. A writer can't do that because there's a huge language barrier. However, what I got out of this game was that in essense a story is much like music and art and it can indeed overcome that barrier... I know, I'm sure everyone is thinking there are tons of games that have been localized from Japan to the US or vice versa, but this time, by gaining the support of the U.S. audience, I was able to feel that first-hand. Of course, this is all thanks to Aksys's awesome localization. I am truly thankful for them.

999 gave me a lot of confidence. I have a feeling my style is a better fit for the US. In Japan, the genre I love and excel in—sci-fi mystery—isn't too popular here. [Laughs] With that said, I'm actually currently developing a game that's even more geared toward the international audience than 999. In order to create a game that can be enjoyed by the world, my staff and I are spending nights and days working hard. In fact, we're planning on releasing a lot of visual novels in the future with localization in mind. I hope you'll look forward to them!



GOING THE WHOLE 999 YARDS

Aksys Games editor Ben Bateman explains what it took to bring 999 to western audiences and shares his thoughts on the genre's future.

NINTENDO POWER To take on a project of 999's scale in an era in which other publishers are passing on even text-light RPGs because of localization costs—honestly, what were you thinking?

BEN BATEMAN We played the game and realized that it was totally awesome. Even if it was something of a risk to invest all that time and money in a mostly unproven genre, we decided it was worth it, and so far fan response suggests it was.

Who approached whom to make the American localization of 999 happen?

Spike, the publisher of 999 in Japan, came to us to see if we would be interested in publishing [the game].

Can you give us some idea of the magnitude of the localization challenge? How did it compare to other Aksys Games releases?

Magnitude is difficult to explain. Many of our games have a vast volume of text that has to be translated, edited, and proofread—Record of Agarest War, Jake Hunter, etc. I don't recall the exact character counts for those games, so I couldn't say how exactly they compare in terms of volume of text. 999 did present a little more of a challege in terms of localization, however, since a lot of the text related to puzzles or intricate plot elements that could be easily disrupted if the wrong choices were made. Contrast that with something like Agarest, where there is a huge volume of text but it's all pretty straightforward.

Were there any other aspects of the localization that gave you particular trouble?

There are a lot, but most of them are puns. Japanese people love puns, and those puns obviously translate poorly. For instance, near the beginning of the game, there is a ladder. If you examine it several times, Junpei will start making terrible jokes about ladders. He jokes about the ladder in Japanese too, but they are mostly playing off of the fact that the Japanese word for ladder (hashigo) also means bar-hopping (i.e., going from bar to bar and getting drunk). That doesn't exactly translate.

There were also some issues that dealt with the character's codenames, and how they related to the story or particular jokes. June's Japanese codename, for instance, was Murasaki, which means purple, and is also a play on her real name. There's a joke involving fluids that plays on murasaki/purple, as well as a plot point much later in the game. Since we changed her codename to June, that meant we had to come up with new jokes and twist the plot twists so that they made sense.

Do you think that traditional all-text-and-art digital novels without actual game elements (such as 999's puzzle rooms or the investigation elements in Jake Hunter) could succeed in the West?

I think they could succeed after a fashion. I don't think we're going to see visual novels do Modern Warfare numbers or something like that any time soon, but Heavy Rain managed pretty decent critical and consumer acclaim, and despite having what people might call "gameplay elements," it was really essentially a visual novel.

Obviously, we have at least some faith in the success of such games—we keep publishing them, after all.

Do you think there might be a market for such games on downloadable platforms like DSiWare?

Platforms like DSiWare do seem like they could be a good fit for games of that nature. To me, at least, visual novels seem much better suited to portable gaming: Who wants to sit on their couch and shuffle through reams of text when you could do the same on the subway on your way to work?

Of course, only part of that is our decision. To bring a game to a mobile platform, we need the help of a developer. If their game is already on the DS or whatever, great, but if it's a game that would require a port, then the developer needs to be into that idea too, since they'll be doing the work of porting it over.

If a Japanese developer asked for your advice on how to make adventure games more appealing to Western audiences, what would you tell him?

Less anime cliches. That would probably be my first piece of advice. I can't tell you how many people I've seen say, "I thought all these characters in 999 were just going to be these anime cliches, but they weren't! Hooray!" Visual novels and adventure games are already in a tiny niche, and by making all of your characters anime stereotypes you're shoving yourself into a niche of a niche.

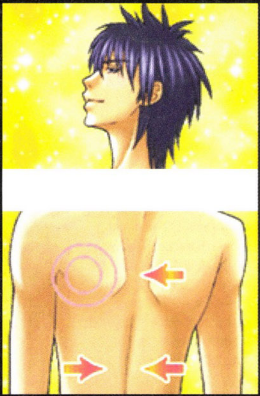
That's not to say I advocate for the complete Westernization of Japanese games, of course. Part of what makes them interesting and attractive is that they are different, but there's a fine line between being interesting and being alienating. I suppose my advice would be to keep in mind that Japanese stories and Western ones frequently make use of very different plot and character archetypes. To assume too much about your audience's knowledge of those archetypes is to risk making your story inaccesible to those who don't understand them.

My second piece of advice would probably be to have more space marines and/or genetically engineered supersoldiers.

Aksys Games has never been shy about localizing games in genres that most publishers do not consider to be commercially viable, such as scrolling shooters and visual comics. Are there any other obscure genres that interest you?

Have you ever heard of Duel Love?

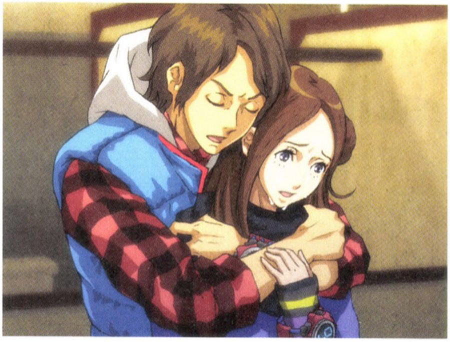
The DS game in which players massage and bathe shirtless men? We have now. Thanks...?

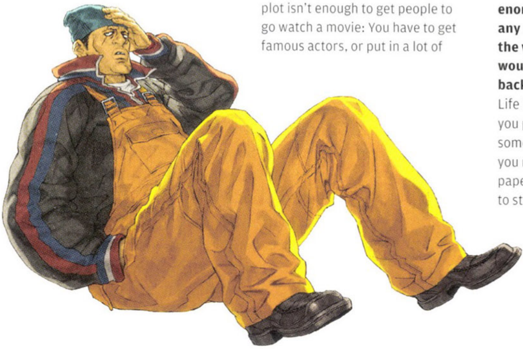


In both of your last two games, the male and female leads have been childhood friends reunited after a long absence. What intrigues you about that relationship?
Hm. I suppose it's because my wife has become a very scary lady. So I guess I'm longing for a character that reminds me of my childhood friend who was so sweet and innocent. On a subconscious level, of course....

As far as I know, 999 was your first game to feature a game mechanic (in this case, the puzzle rooms) outside of the visual-novel parts. Why did you decide to include that element? Do you see adding game elements like that as a necessary evolution for the genre?
This really ties in with your first question. Currently it's really hard to sell a game in Japan that is a straight-up visual novel. If you just want to enjoy a story, you'd go watch a movie, or read a comic or a book, or whatever. There are a lot of other places where you can get a story, so why pay a lot of money to get your novel in a video game?

The reason why there are puzzle rooms in 999 is because I personally love puzzles and escape games, but also because of the current realities of the gaming industry. I wanted as many people as possible to pick up this game, so it was only natural to add additional game mechanics. We figured, you go into the shop, you look at the packaging, you see it has puzzles, and you think, "Oh, this looks fun." Pretty simple, but that's good enough for us. Did that plan work? I'm not sure, but that was our thinking.





However, I don't think that adding game mechanics is a necessity for the evolution of the genre. If you just want to enjoy the essence of a visual novel, you don't even really need the puzzles. But I guess we just didn't know how to sell the game without them. I can't just say, "Seriously, it's fun!" and expect people to go pick it up.

I suppose the same thing applies to other forms of entertainment. For instance, sometimes a good plot isn't enough to get people to go watch a movie: You have to get famous actors, or put in a lot of special effects, or add romantic or erotic scenes. Even if the screenwriter doesn't feel like they need those things, they have no choice but to put them in.

Don't get me wrong, though. I'm not saying that visual novels don't need puzzles at all. I know I'm repeating myself, but I put them in 999 because I love them.

Conveying a story as complicated as the one in 999 must be an enormous challenge. Are there any aspects that didn't work out the way you had hoped? What would you change if you could go back in time and do it again?
Life in general doesn't go the way you plan it. But if you try to force something to happen, sometimes you make it worse. Take a look at a paper clip, for example. If you try to straighten it out, it ends up being this squiggly useless piece of wire. But because it's twisted and warped into the shape of a paperclip, it functions as it should. What I think is important is to just go with the flow, and let things unwind as they should. Maybe I just trust in the morphogenetic field?

So to answer your question: What would you change if you could go back in time? My answer would be: my wife.

As far as I know, you've never made a direct sequel to any of your games before, but you floated the idea of a 999 sequel in the Aksys Answers Q&A. Putting financial issues aside, do you think the story of 999 should continue?
Well, I didn't write 999 with the intent that it would have a sequel. Do I think it should have one, though? Yes, I do. I guess it all depends on how well 999 does, so please, spread the word on your blogs, and Twitter and Facebook and so on, and you'll make me a very happy man. We're counting on the fans!

Lastly, I hope from the bottom of my heart that a lot of people will read this interview...and that my wife won't be among them.

The Greatest Moments of

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA

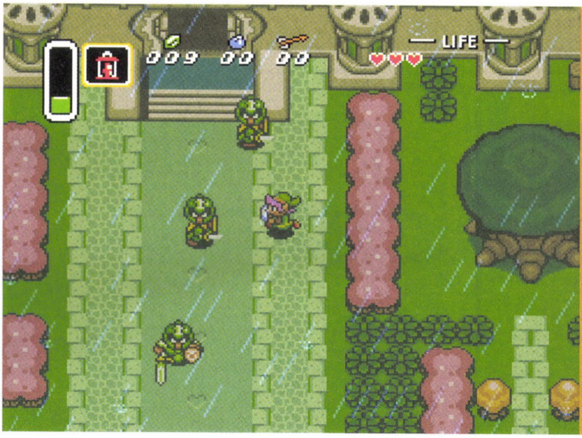
SUPER NES ERA

A 25th anniversary look back at the moments that defined Link's adventures.

WE'RE STILL TRYING to get over the fact that The Legend of Zelda turns 25 this year. We clearly remember taking that gold cartridge out of its box for the first time and popping it into our Nintendo Entertainment System, and we can recall everything from being handed the Wooden Sword at the start of the game to our final Silver Arrow piercing Ganon at the climax.

With last issue's reminiscences of Link's first two adventures still fresh on our minds, we're shifting forward to the series's sole Super NES title. After the side-scrolling gameplay of Zelda II: The Adventure of Link on NES, The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past returned to the classic overhead view of the first Zelda. This third game is still extremely popular with fans, and with memorable moments such as these, it's not hard to see why.

BY **PHIL THEOBALD**



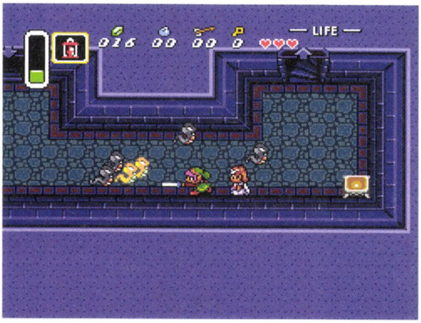
The Stormy Beginning

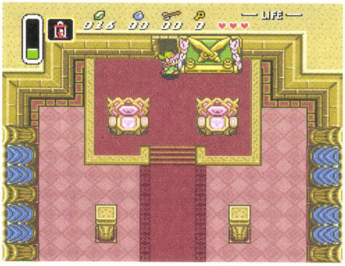
A Link to the Past begins on a wonderfully dramatic note. Link, living with his uncle, is awakened in the middle of the night by a telepathic message from Princess Zelda, who pleads for rescue from Hyrule Castle's dungeon. Link's uncle asks Link to stay behind while he goes after the princess. Of course, it wouldn't be much of a game if you obeyed that request, and Link soon finds that his uncle's attempt didn't go as planned. With his final breath, the failed rescuer gives his nephew his sword and asks the new hero to save the day.

Pretty intense, right? The grim mood is greatly intensified by the pounding storm that rages while all of this happens. Link travels to the castle through torrential rain, lighting flashes, and crashing thunder. It's a great way to show from the start that things aren't well in Hyrule.

Escape with Zelda

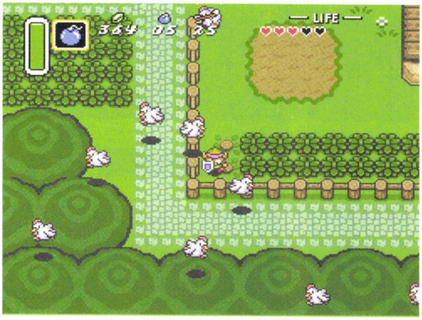
After battling a mace-wielding guard, Link frees Zelda from her cell. The pair isn't out of trouble yet, however. In order to escape the castle, they must make their way up to the throne room, where Zelda reveals a secret passage that leads into the Hyrule sewer system. Like her fellow princess Leia Organa, Zelda seems to favor the escape routes with the most interesting smells.

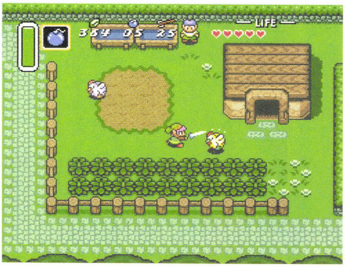




Cucco Abuse

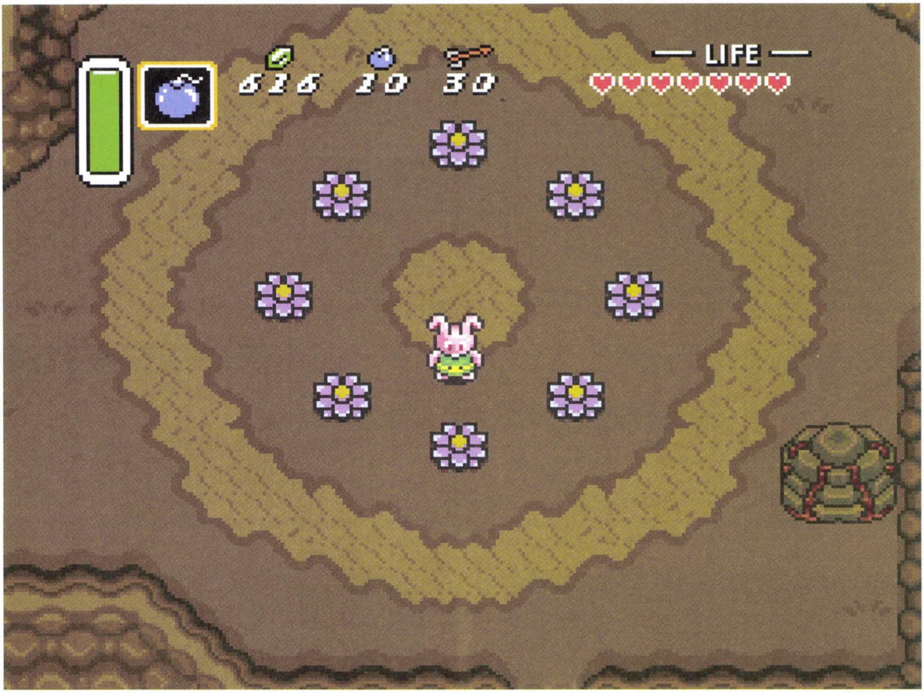
They may look like chickens, but don't be fooled! Cuccos are far fiercer than your typical poultry. If Link throws them or slashes them with his sword, they appear helpless at first. Keep at it, though, and they'll eventually decide that enough is enough. A horde of the foul fowl swarms Link, pecking away at his health until he reaches the safety of the indoors.

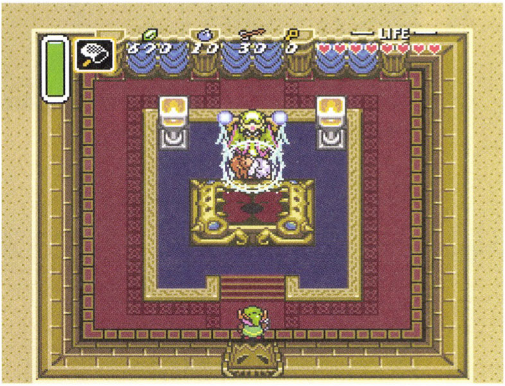


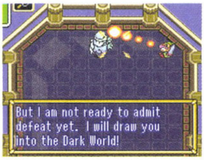


Hare Hitch

In A Link to the Past, there exists the Dark World, a twisted version of the mythical Golden Land. Those who travel into the Dark World are transformed to reflect their personality. Ganon, for instance, becomes a monstrous brute. The kind and pure Link, however, becomes a helpless pink bunny. Only by collecting the Moon Pearl can Link maintain his true form (and his ability to defend himself) while in this realm.



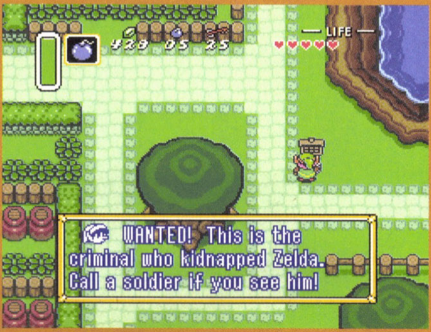



But I am not ready to admit defeat yet. I will draw you into the Dark World!

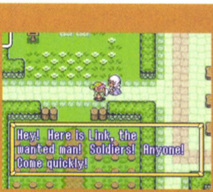
Link, it is I, Sahasrahla. I am communicating to you across the void through

Agahnim and the Dark World

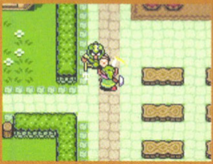
Relatively early in Link's quest, he is forced to do battle with Agahnim, the evil wizard that has taken over Hyrule Castle. Although the villain may seem tough, Link can defeat him with a mere Bug-Catching Net. Agahnim is not amused by his defeat and uses his last bit of power to send Link to the Dark World, where Agahnim has also imprisoned the seven maidens (including Princess Zelda).



WANTED! This is the criminal who kidnapped Zelda. Call a soldier if you see him!

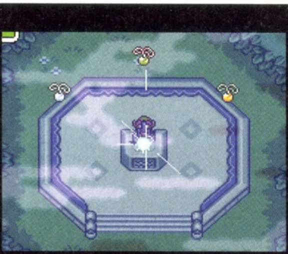


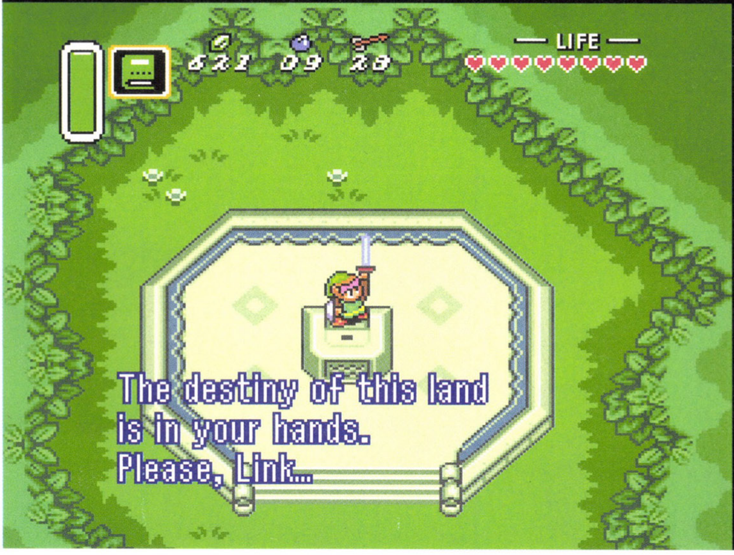
Hey! Here is Link, the wanted man! Soldiers! Anyone! Come quickly!



Hyrule's Most Wanted

With Hyrule under the control of the dark wizard Agahnim, heroes like Link are not welcomed by the authorities. Wanted posters litter Kakariko Village, proclaiming Link to be an enemy of the kingdom. If you talk to the wrong person in town, enemy soldiers will be called in to take care of you.

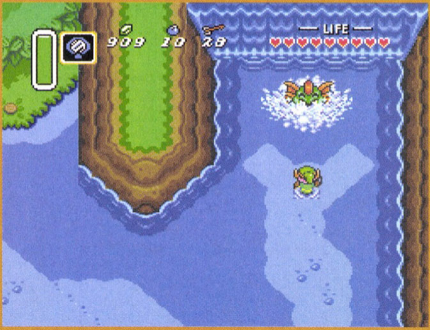


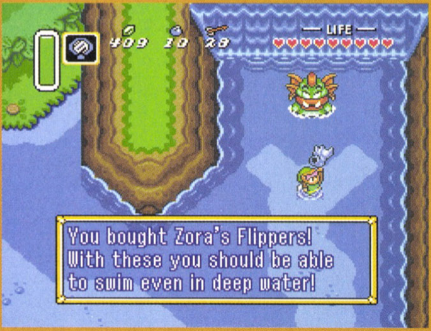


The destiny of this land is in your hands. Please, Link...

The Master Sword

Link's iconic weapon made its debut in A Link to the Past, but it wasn't easy to earn. The sword is hidden in the fog-covered Lost Woods, and there are fake Master Swords set up to fool those who seek it. If you make it through the mazelike woods, Link will discover a clearing that is home to adorable critters and a large pedestal that contains the legendary blade.

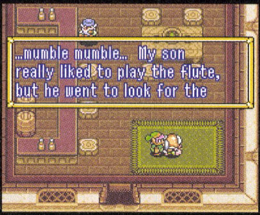




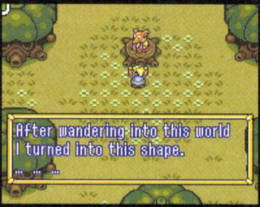
You bought Zora's Flippers!
With these you should be able
to swim even in deep water!

Fishy Fees

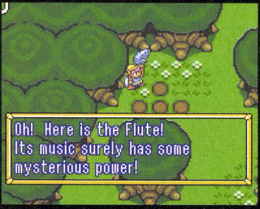
Link is certainly not afraid to get his feet wet as he explores Hyrule, but even he can't get very far in deep water. To improve Link's swimming abilities, you'll have to track down an enterprising Zora who's willing to sell Link a pair of flippers. Hopefully you've been hoarding your money—at 500 Rupees, these fins ain't cheap, and considering that Link can carry only 999 Rupees at once, the purchase takes a big chunk out of your savings.



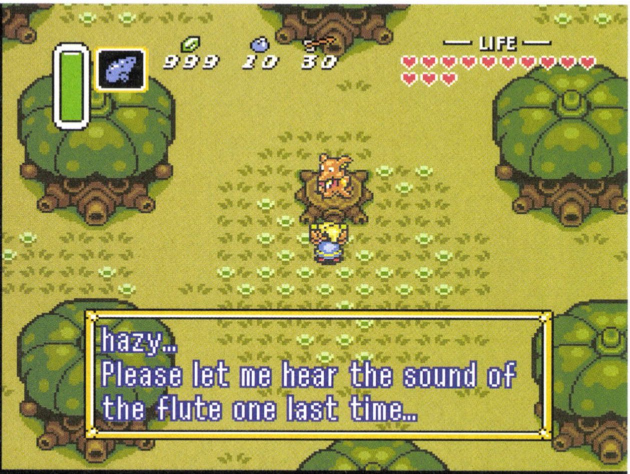
...mumble mumble... My son
really liked to play the flute,
but he went to look for the



After wandering into this world
I turned into this shape.
... ...



Oh! Here is the Flute!
Its music surely has some
mysterious power!



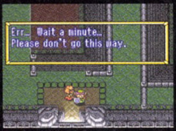
hazy...
Please let me hear the sound of
the flute one last time...

Flute Boy

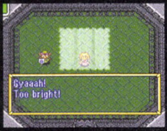
This tragic side story never fails to get us misty-eyed. During his travels, Link meets an old man who speaks wistfully of his missing son, who loved playing the flute (a clear precursor to Link's ocarina). In the Dark World, Link meets the transformed Flute Boy, who asks Link to recover his prized instrument. Returning to the Dark World with the flute, Link learns that Flute Boy has grown too weak from his time in the evil realm. The lad's final request is for Link to play the flute for him before he petrifies into a tree. Link returns to Hyrule to deliver the news of Flute Boy's fate to the distraught father. The old man thanks Link for his efforts and bequeaths the instrument to our hero.

The Mysterious Girl

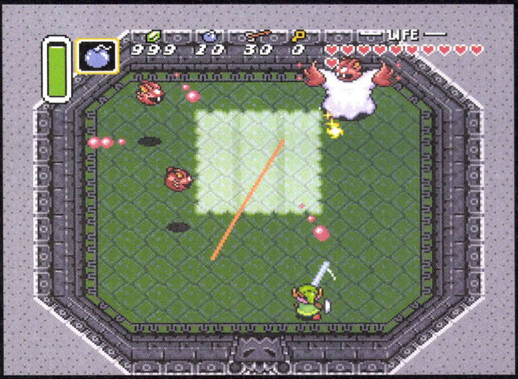
In Kakariko Village, Link comes across a building that it said to be the former hideout of a thief named Blind. Not coincidentally, Link later explores an area known as Blind's Dungeon. Within the maze, Link discovers a girl trapped in a cell. After Link frees her, the girl follows him around the dungeon and asks for his assistance in escaping. Despite her pleas, however, she refuses to leave the dungeon. After being led into a particular chamber, a beam of sunlight strikes the girl, revealing her true form—Blind himself!



Err… Wait a minute…
Please don't go this way.

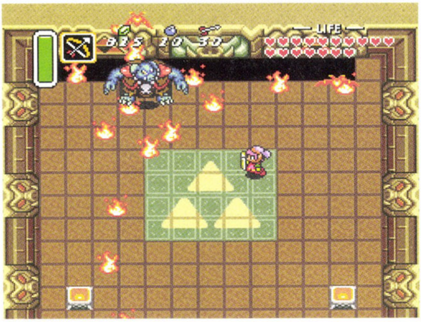


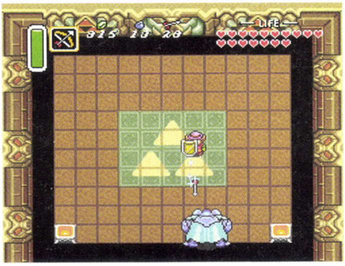
Gyaaah!
Too bright!



Ganon Surprise

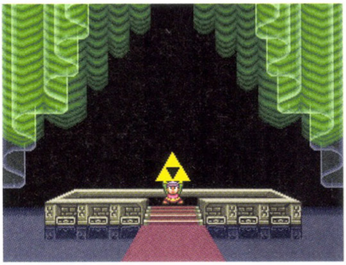
After rescuing the seven maidens, Link challenges Agahnim to another battle only to find that the wizard was simply the alter ego of the vile Ganon. Thus begins Link's second battle against the Prince of Darkness. As in the original Legend of Zelda, Ganon is exceptionally weak to Silver Arrows. Without the powerful projectiles, Link will have little chance of emerging victorious.

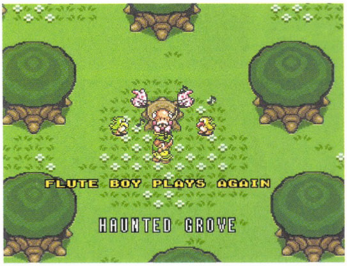




Happy Endings

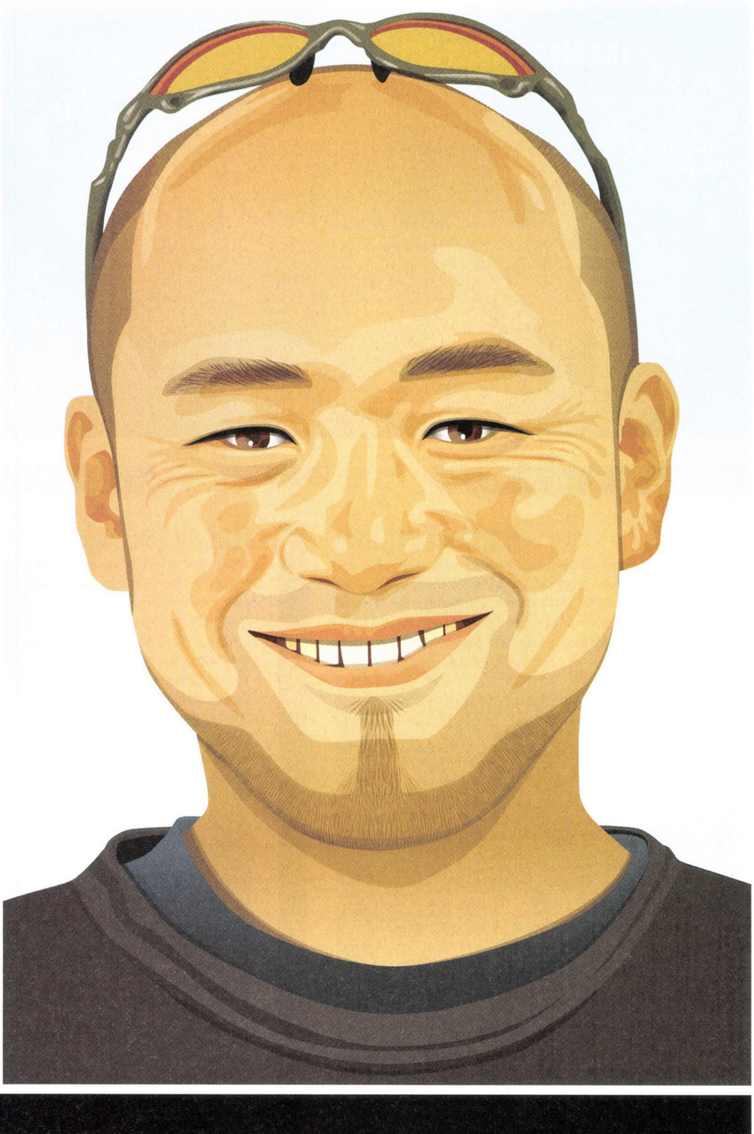
With Ganon defeated, the villain's vision of the Dark World vanishes and the Golden Land is restored to its former glory. More than that, however, multiple side stories are tied up during the end sequence. Among them, we learn the Link's uncle survived his encounter with the enemy soldiers. And guess what? With Ganon's spell broken, good ol' Flute Boy returned to his true form. He can once again play his music for all the animals of the forest. Finally, we see Link valiantly walking away from the clearing in the Lost Woods. His quest complete, he has returned the Master Sword to its rightful place, where it sleeps again.





51

Power Profiles



DATE OF BIRTH
December 19, 1970

BIRTHPLACE
Matsumoto, Japan

POSITION
Game designer, Platinum Games

BEST KNOWN FOR
Creating such diverse classics as Resident Evil 2 and Okami; giving us "Henshin a Go Go, baby!"

FAVORITE FOOD
Good ramen

CURRENT PROJECTS
Unknown

Hideki Kamiya

ILLUSTRATION BY CHRISTINA EMPEDOCLES

They say the cream always rises to the top, and in the case of Hideki Kamiya, it didn't take long. Just a couple of years after breaking into game design, Kamiya was handed the reigns to his company's most important franchise as director of Resident Evil 2. That project tested the mettle of the budding young creator, but he ultimately delivered a masterpiece and has been cranking out amazing work ever since. Whether it's Devil May Cry providing the blueprint for modern action games or Okami delivering the most affecting adventure this side of The Legend of Zelda, Kamiya's titles can always be counted on to make an impact. He currently lends his talents to PlatinumGames, where his latest project remains shrouded in secrecy.

NINTENDO POWER
How did you originally get into the video game business?

HIDEKI KAMIYA
I loved video games as a boy. After graduating college, I looked for jobs through the normal channels. A design document I submitted to Capcom was well-received, so I ended up there. I got an offer from Namco, as well—and I preferred them to Capcom at the time—but it was for an art position. I wanted to be a game designer, so I went with Capcom.

When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?

A game designer. I always knew I wanted to make my own games. I think I first became conscious of the term "game designer" in middle school, when I read a magazine article entitled "A Conversation Between Game Designers" with Shigeru Miyamoto and Masanobu Endo.

Though it turned out great in the end, Resident Evil 2 had a famously tumultuous development cycle that involved starting over from scratch at one point. To what do you attribute that, and how did you feel while it was happening?

As I recall, the legendary lost Resident Evil we called RE1.5 was in development for some 18 months, and could essentially be played from start to finish.

It was canceled for the simple reason that my abilities weren't up to snuff. As a first-time director, my skill in communicating with team members, expressing my vision, and making decisions was lacking. That was clearly reflected in the quality of the work. Although the final decision to throw everything out and start over was made by the producer, Shinji Mikami, advice from the screenwriter, Noboru Sugimura, also had a profound impact. Mr. Sugimura was a passionate Resident Evil 1 fan, and the head of Capcom R&D at the time, Yoshiki Okamoto, asked him to play through RE1.5 to see if something couldn't be done about the quality. In the end, we decided to go back to the drawing board with Mr. Sugimura as the screenwriter. Resident Evil 2 was only completed as a result of cooperation and advice from many individuals.

Frankly, I remember being relieved when the decision was made to start over. In fact, on the way back home from visiting Mr. Sugimura for advice, I overheard Mr. Mikami saying to himself, "Maybe we should start from scratch." From that moment, I was fired up and feeling very positive about tackling the game anew. The only reason I'm answering these questions today is because Mr. Mikami let me continue as director. I don't think I'd ever have the guts to make a judgment call like that—tossing out a nearly complete project and starting over.

It seems like you've always worked with acclaimed producers like Mikami and Atsushi Inaba. When we chatted with Suda51, he mentioned that having a good producer is critical for a director to realize his creative potential. Do you feel the same way?

I absolutely do. In the development environments I've worked in, producers have built a framework within which I can put maximum effort toward thinking as a director. Directors and producers must work toward goals that can often seem contrary: What does the creator want to make? What are the right decisions for business? We're only able to manifest our greatest strengths because we trust each other.

What are some of the things you learned from Mikami and Inaba? And how do their styles differ as producers?

Mr. Mikami has been a mentor since I first joined Capcom, and I learned what it means to have a game designer's conviction by watching him—a deep and noble conviction that can't be put into words. I think everyone who was in Capcom Production Studio 4 under Mr. Mikami still brings that same conviction to game development. As far as Mr. Mikami's and Inaba's differences... my impression is that Mr. Mikami is able to pull things along in the studio, even in the hands-on creative aspects, whereas Inaba entrusts the creative side solely to the developers, but has a great deal of cards he can play to his advantage in a wide range of producer tasks.

Based on what we know about you from Twitter (@PG_kamiya), you seem to play at least one classic NES game per week from start to finish, you've learned to speak English almost perfectly, you seem to tweet about 400 times per day, you spend a lot of time at the gym... so how do you still find time to make games?

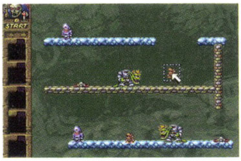
Right now I'm enjoying Twitter more than making games! When my tweets begin to taper off, you'll know things are getting busy at work. [Laughs]

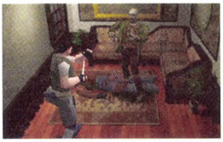
Speaking of classic NES games, what is it that you love so much about those 8-bit titles? And do you feel there was something lost in that era as compared to modern games?

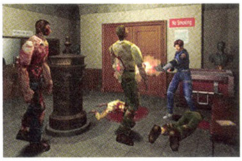
As a game designer, I have deep respect for

GAMEOGRAPHY

Few game designers can claim a body of work as diverse as Hideki Kamiya's. The one thing that ties them all together (besides kicking ass) is that they star some of gaming's most memorable protagonists.


NAZO MAKAIMURA: INCREDIBLE TOONS
1996, SEGA SATURN (JAPAN ONLY)
PLANNER


RESIDENT EVIL
1996, PLAYSTATION
SYSTEM PLANNER


RESIDENT EVIL 2
1998, PLAYSTATION
DIRECTOR

DEVIL MAY CRY
2001, PLAYSTATION 2
DIRECTOR

Power Profiles

> *"Games are entertainment that anyone can enjoy. Personally, I'd rather be an entertainer than an artist."*

games of the 8-bit era. That was game design in its most pure, refined form—there was no using graphics or hardware power as a crutch. In the current environment, barriers to imagination have been shattered, and design hardships largely come down to material resources. If I were able to travel back in time to the 8-bit era, would my own abilities hold water? I often wonder. I have to extend my utmost respect to 8-bit game designers, because that was an age when the true value of imagination was tested.

More and more developers are focused on reaching as wide an audience as possible and trying to appeal to the casual gamer. How do you feel about that trend?
Games and movies are both entertainment, yet there's a big difference between them: games require active participation. You can reach the ending of films by simply watching, but games require the player to pick up a controller and expend effort, overcoming obstacles to proceed. Some players consider overcoming obstacles to provide a pleasurable sense of accomplishment, while others may become distressed and give up... it's different for each individual.

I personally believe that this sense of accomplishment is the very best sensation games can offer, but I also realize that different people want different things. If we wish to expand games as a form of entertainment, and encourage game culture in general, then I believe we must satisfy both the longtime, hardcore users, as well as newer, casual players.

What are your thoughts on the Nintendo 3DS? Do you have any interest in developing for the system?
Of course. I just don't have any ideas yet. [Laughs]

What aspect of the video game development process do you enjoy the most?
First, I have tremendous fun writing the initial design document, when my dreams can run free. Then development begins, and things that existed on the page start appearing onscreen; it only gets more exciting. When the project schedule begins to come together in earnest, and our work takes on a sense of reality, we occasionally have to adjust the scope of our ideas in order to create a viable project. That can be rough, but working every day surrounded by incredible staff putting incredible work on the screen excites me as a game fan.

When our game is finally released, I get as giddy as a kid, sneaking into game stores to watch reactions, and reading gamers' opinions online. To make a long story short, I enjoy almost every aspect of game development. One, however, I can't stand. At the very end of development, content creation stops and bug-checking begins. It's a radical change, and the days when everyone could enjoy swapping ideas back and forth seem like a dream. No more implementing new ideas, no more fixing niggling issues...just day after day of tireless bug-checking. That period is hell for me.

When you're stumped by a particularly difficult problem while creating a game, what's your process for working through it?
Wisdom and guts.

What other games or game creators do you most admire or respect, and why?
Some games I admire are Gradius, Yie Ar Kung Fu, The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past, Super Castlevania IV, Space Harrier, Gardia, Star Fox, Star Fox 64, Fantasy Zone, Cybernator, Mike Tyson's Punch-Out!!, Temple Labyrinth Dababa, Falsion, Wonder Boy in Monster Land, Snatcher (PC-88 version), Sorcerian, Star Cruiser, Arkanoid, ActRaiser, Planet Puzzle League/Panel de Pon, Shanghai, Phoenix Wright...there may be more I'm forgetting. There are really so many, it's a little ridiculous. Creators I respect? Everyone who worked on the games I love.

Do you consider video games to be art?
Games are something more lighthearted—entertainment that anyone can enjoy. Personally, I'd rather be an entertainer than an artist.

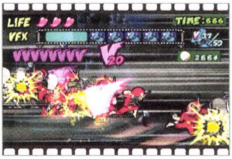
If you weren't making video games, what do you think you'd be doing?
I never really had any other goal than to be a game designer, so I may have accepted the offer I received from a small business in my home prefecture of Shinshu and become a salaryman. I still sometimes think a slow life out in the country might have been nice.

What is your favorite hobby or pastime?
Right now, it's Twitter. [Laughs] I like Internet auctions and poking around junk shops, too. The thrill of finding a real bargain is like nothing else!

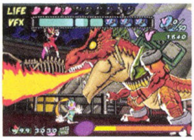
Lately I've been absorbed in putting together the ultimate play environment for retro consoles like the NES and Sega Master System, modding them to produce RGB signals. Playing NES games through a converter on a modern HDTV brings quite a smile to my face.

If you could have one superpower, what would it be and why?
Teleportation would be useful. I could warp around to tourist attractions and good restaurants on a whim. I could even commute to work from the rich, natural beauty of Shinshu!

GAMEOGRAPHY



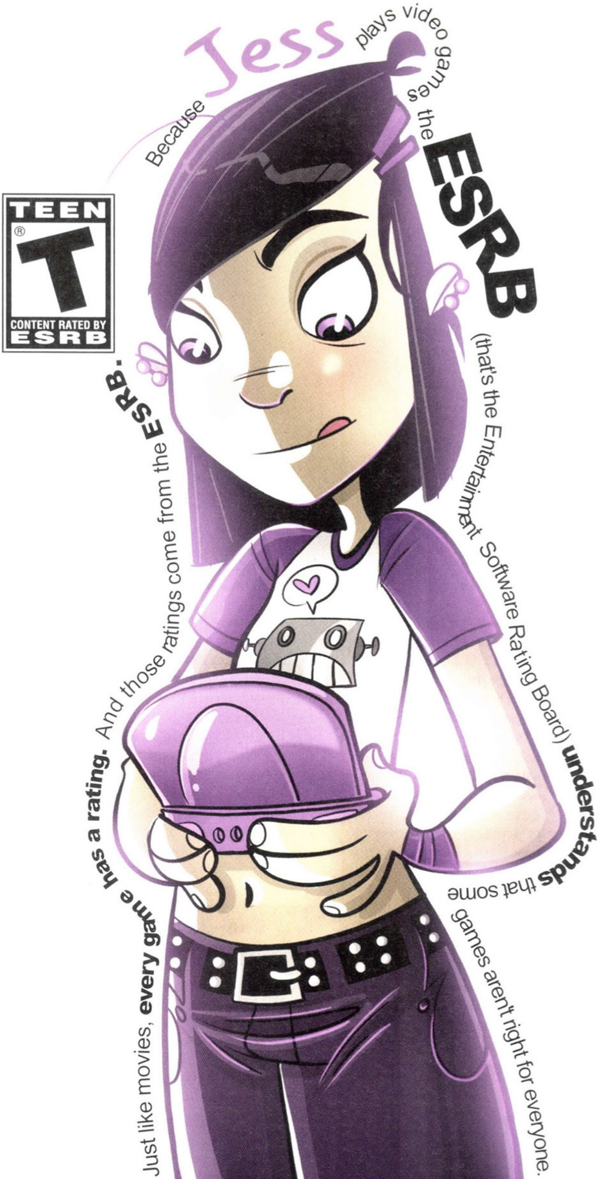
VIEWTIFUL JOE
2003, GAMECUBE
DIRECTOR



VIEWTIFUL JOE 2
2004, GAMECUBE
WRITER

OKAMI
2006, PLAYSTATION 2
DIRECTOR

BAYONETTA
2010, XBOX 360
DIRECTOR


Because Jess plays video games the ESRB (that's the Entertainment Software Rating Board) understands that some games aren't right for everyone.
Just like movies, every game has a rating. And those ratings come from the ESRB.
TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

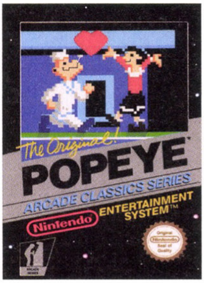
© 2006 ESRB. All rights reserved.

www.ESRB.org

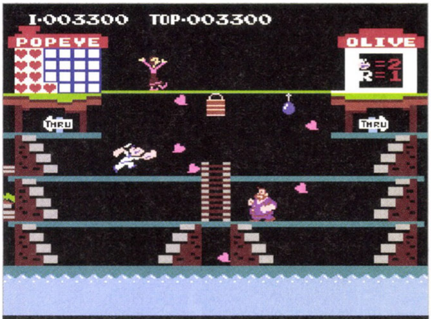
Not by the chin on my chinny chin chin!

Popeye

Before Super Mario, there was a mighty sailor man.



PLATFORM: **NES**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **NINTENDO**
RELEASE DATE: **JUNE 1986**
COVERED IN ISSUES: **N/A**
HEARTS TO NAB BEFORE OLIVE IS CONVINCED OF YOUR LOVE: **24**



Olive Oyl clearly has a lot of love to give, and if Popeye doesn't accept it all, he's sunk. So get going on punching those falling hearts!

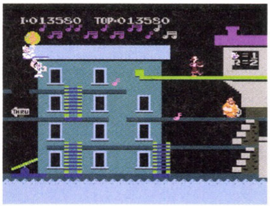
When Shigeru Miyamoto was getting ready to make his first arcade game for Nintendo, his intention was to create a game based on EC Segar's classic cartoon character, Popeye. When the company was unable to obtain the license for the famous sailor man, Miyamoto instead created some game called Donkey Kong. Yeah, we've never heard of it, either. Apparently, there aren't even any donkeys in the game.

Soon after, Nintendo did secure the license, and Miyamoto was finally able to make his Popeye game, which hit arcades in 1982. Not surprisingly, it was released on the NES a few years later. Just like in the old cartoons, the goal of the game is to help Popeye win Olive Oyl's heart while avoiding the thuggish Brutus (aka Bluto).

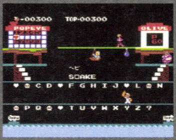
Although there are three very distinct stages, the core gameplay remains the same throughout—Olive stands out of reach at the top of the screen and tosses down objects that Popeye must collect before they sink into the water below. Brutus, of course, interferes by patrolling the level in hopes of walloping our hero. Popeye may be able to punch, but his jabs are effective only against tossed bottles or the occasional vulture. To turn the tables on Brutus, you'll need to collect (what else?) a can of spinach. Munching down on the leafy greens temporarily boosts Popeye's strength, allowing him to knock out the villain (at least momentarily).

Each of the three levels also has its own unique gimmick that affects how you approach the challenge. The first stage, a stair-filled dock, features a bucket that you drop (though just once) on Brutus' head, temporarily stopping him. The infant Swee'Pee has a cameo in the second level; bonus points can be earned by bouncing off a seesaw and touching the baby's floating platform. A pirate ship is the setting for the final stage, where a moving floor and the aforementioned vulture make getting around more difficult.

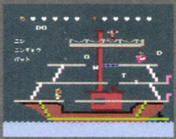
Nintendo rarely creates licensed video games, making Popeye something of an unusual treat. More than that, though, it's still a very fun score-attack game. Don't let that darn ape overshadow this tough gazookus. —**PHIL T.**



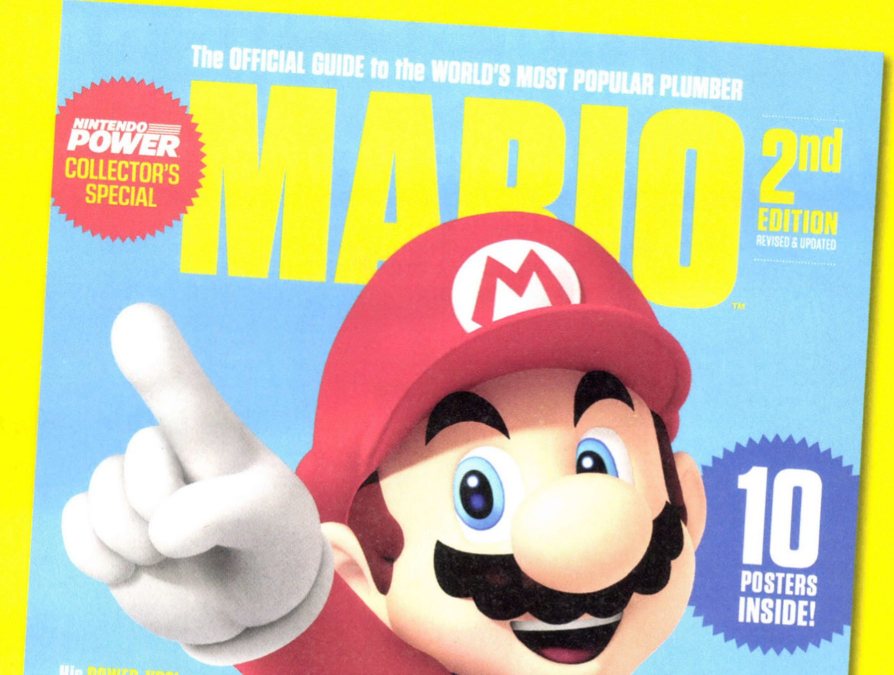
LOST AT SEA



Well blow me down! Did you know that there was another Popeye game released on the NES? Well, technically it was released only on the Famicom, the Japanese version of the NES. This 1983 game was titled Popeye no Eigo Asobi, which translates to Popeye's English Fun. Like the name suggests, it was designed to teach English words to Japanese children. Nintendo didn't see much of a market for the game outside of Japan (go figure), so it remains a Famicom exclusive. It wasn't the last Popeye title to stay in Japan—a 1990 maze game for Game Boy and a 1994 Super Famicom (Super NES) board game/platformer by Technos (the creators of Double Dragon) would also never leave their home country. In 1991, the Game Boy game got a platformer sequel simply titled Popeye 2. When that game was released in the US in 1993, many assumed that it was meant to be a follow-up to the NES game since its portable predecessor was never released over here.



HAVE A FAVORITE CLASSIC GAME YOU'D LIKE TO SEE REVISITED?
Send us your requests—we'll consider them for a future installment of Playback. **nintendopower@futureus.com**


The OFFICIAL GUIDE to the WORLD'S MOST POPULAR PLUMBER
NINTENDO POWER
COLLECTOR'S SPECIAL
MARIO™
2nd EDITION
REVISED & UPDATED
10 POSTERS INSIDE!
His POWER-UPS!
His PALS!
His MUSTACHE!
HIS BIGGEST GAMES!
Everything there is to know about your favorite hero!

ON SALE NOW!

Available at newsstands,
or order it now at
www.nintendopower.com/SPC

Future
MEDIA WITH PASSION

Nintendo properties are trademarks of Nintendo.

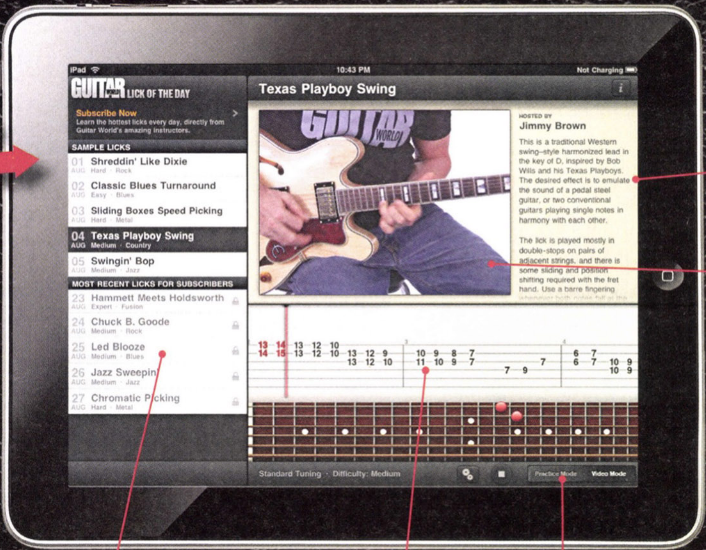
© 2011 Future US, Inc.

GUITAR WORLD LICK OF THE DAY

A MUST-HAVE APP FOR EVERY GUITARIST

from the brilliant minds at GUITAR WORLD and AGILE PARTNERS

OPTIMIZED FOR iPAD!
–use it on the iPhone and iPod touch, too!



iPad 10:43 PM Not Charging

GUITAR WORLD LICK OF THE DAY

Subscribe Now
Learn the hottest licks every day, directly from Guitar World's amazing instructors.

SAMPLE LICKS

- 01 AUG Shreddin' Like Dixie · Hard · Rock
- 02 AUG Classic Blues Turnaround · Easy · Blues
- 03 AUG Sliding Boxes Speed Picking · Hard · Metal
- 04 AUG Texas Playboy Swing · Medium · Country
- 05 AUG Swingin' Bop · Medium · Jazz

MOST RECENT LICKS FOR SUBSCRIBERS

- 23 AUG Hammett Meets Holdsworth · Expert · Fusion
- 24 AUG Chuck B. Goode · Medium · Rock
- 25 AUG Led Blooze · Medium · Blues
- 26 AUG Jazz Sweepin' · Medium · Jazz
- 27 AUG Chromatic Picking · Hard · Metal

Texas Playboy Swing

HOSTED BY
Jimmy Brown

This is a traditional Western swing–style harmonized lead in the key of D, inspired by Bob Wills and his Texas Playboys. The desired effect is to emulate the sound of a pedal steel guitar, or two conventional guitars playing single notes in harmony with each other.

The lick is played mostly in double-stops on pairs of adjacent strings, and there is some sliding and position shifting required with the fret hand. Use a barre fingering

Standard Tuning · Difficulty: Medium

Performance notes written by GUITAR WORLD

High-quality video demonstrations with full-screen option!

Hundreds of licks in all styles – rock, metal, blues, country, jazz – with a new lick delivered every day

Standard and tab music notation for each lick that scrolls in sync with the video

Practice mode lets you control tempo, looping and metronome

Lick
Jeff Beck Style Country Lick
5
6 5 4
7 7 5
7

Learn a new lick every day with GUITAR WORLD's award-winning instructors and guest celebrities like

Zakk Wylde, Joe Satriani and more!

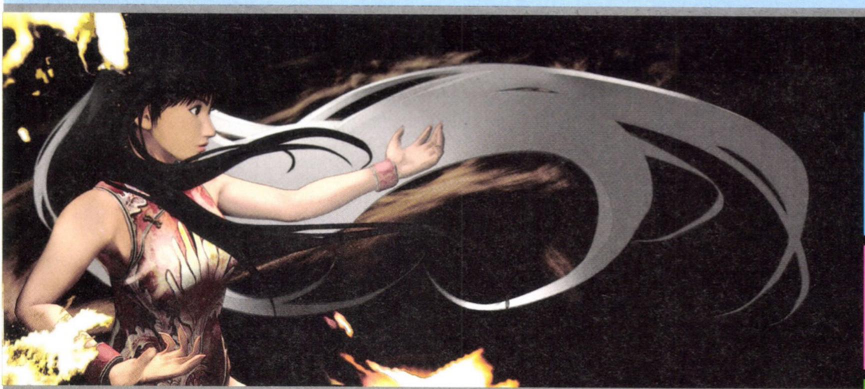
Available on the App Store

DOWNLOAD AND TRY IT FOR FREE!

Find out more at LickoftheDayApp.com

REVIEWS

IN-DEPTH REVIEWS OF ALL THE LATEST GAMES



IN THIS SECTION

Wii

RIO pg.89

THOR: GOD OF THUNDER pg.86

VIRTUA TENNIS 4 pg.88

NINTENDO DS

LEGO BATTLES: NINJAGO pg.88

RIO pg.89

THOR: GOD OF THUNDER pg.87

NINTENDO 3DS

CARTOON NETWORK PUNCH TIME EXPLOSION pg.89

DEAD OR ALIVE DIMENSIONS pg.84

RABBIDS TRAVEL IN TIME pg.89

SPONGEBOB SQUIGGLEPANTS pg.87

TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL 3D pg.88

Does Dead or Alive Dimensions for Nintendo 3DS knock out the competition? Turn the page to find out...

That Old Ninja Magic

DEAD OR ALIVE DIMENSIONS

RATING: 9.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO 3DS**
PUBLISHER: **TECMO KOEI**
DEVELOPER: **TEAM NINJA**
ESRB: **TEEN**

Nimble ninjas, baffling bosses, and busty babes—Dead or Alive is (in)famous for all these things. But this fighting-game franchise is also known for having simple-yet-deep gameplay and for pushing the graphical boundaries of any system on which it appears. Dead or Alive Dimensions, the first DOA to grace a Nintendo platform, is no different in these regards. This handheld title exemplifies everything that DOA is—which makes it both a perfect introduction for newbies and a welcome refresher for series veterans.

In fact, Dead or Alive Dimensions goes out of its way to be as accessible as possible. Essentially a compilation of the mainline Dead or Alive games (there's no beach-volleyball nonsense here), Dimensions does an excellent job of summarizing the franchise's storyline—a tale of an evil corporation, a runaway ninja, and diabolical clones—and provides a combat tutorial in the single-player Chronicle mode. Chronicle is also where you see the well-produced, top-notch, prerendered cut-scenes from the previous titles. New in-engine cut-scenes are added to help flesh out Chronicle's story, and while it's mostly good, there are several instances in which the characters come across like the talking mannequins from the Old Navy commercials. The way the camera moves helps make these scenes feel dynamic, but the stock-still models feel out of place, especially since everything else in the game moves so fluidly.

The gameplay is as fast and furious as ever—and it's even better when the 3D effect is turned off. Granted, with the 3D activated the game has a wonderful sense of depth and moves at a solid 30 frames per second, but the frame rate doubles to a silky-smooth 60 fps when the 3D effect is deactivated. For a game as fast-paced as this one is, I prefer having the better frame rate even if that means the visuals aren't as impressive.

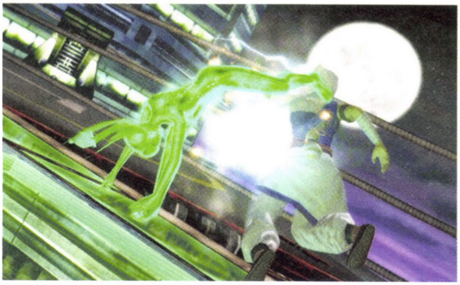
As is the case with many fighting games, button-mashing is always an option; but using some strategy will grant you a higher chance of success. Do you let loose a combo? (You can take a quick glance at the move list on the bottom screen if you forget what's in your arsenal; you can even tap a combo to unleash it.) Do you wait for your rival to strike and then use a hold to reverse it? Or do you grab and

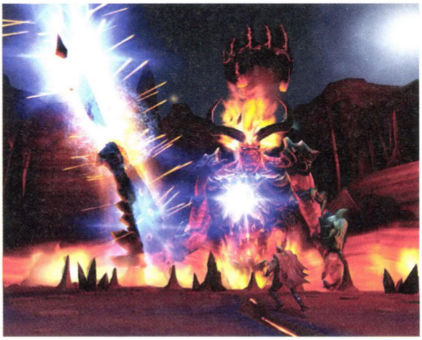
throw your adversary? All three options have pros and cons, as DOA uses a rock-paper-scissors-style fighting system. (Holds beat strikes, strikes beat throws, and throws beat holds.) Anticipating what your opponent is going to do and reacting quickly is a big part of obtaining victory—and thinking quick on your feet proves especially important when playing through Dimensions's other single-player modes (not accounting for Free Play): Arcade, Survival, and Tag Challenge.

Perhaps in order to make for a better handheld experience, the three modes are broken up into easily digestible chunks. For instance, Arcade mode has you competing in a series of fights (there are six series to choose from), whereas Tag Challenge has you facing one or two opponents per mission (there are 20 missions in all). The series and missions can get incredibly tough as you progress, with the final few Tag Challenge missions—wherein you fight bosses such as Tengu, Genra, and Alpha-152—being particularly frustrating. (Of course, finally besting these baddies is immensely gratifying.) It doesn't help that you are forced to team up with an AI partner in the single-player Tag Challenge mode; the outcomes feel out of your control when you have two computer-controlled opponents squaring off against each other. Sure, you can tag yourself in when the words "Tag OK" appear onscreen, but that doesn't help if you're already knocked out. (Also annoying is the fact that your AI teammate interrupts you and tags himself in when your health bar is down to half.) It's peculiar that you can't play as both tag-team partners as is common practice in other fighting games that feature tag-team combat. Fortunately, you can team up with a human ally when playing Tag Challenge via local wireless. The online portion of the game wasn't playable at press time, however. Playing cooperatively would make this mode a lot more fun, even if you and your buddy still have a tough time with the later missions.

Whether cooperating or competing, multiplayer is generally the best way to enjoy fighting games. But with the Throwdown mode, which makes use of the Nintendo 3DS system's StreetPass functionality, Dimensions takes the idea of going head-to-head a step beyond the typical multiplayer matches. As you play Dimensions, the game takes note of which of the 25 characters you use most and how you play with them. Say you favor Kasumi, for example; the game creates an AI-controlled version of Kasumi that has your individual fighting tendencies, and that character can then challenge those that you StreetPass with. Likewise, you can fight against other people's avatars that you've received. This is not exactly a game-selling feature, but it is a neat little addition. (And I find it far more compelling than posing and photographing collectible in-game figurines in Dimensions's Showcase mode.)

It's funny to think that just a few short months ago there were very few fighting games on Nintendo platforms. Within the launch window of the Nintendo 3DS, we've gotten two—Dead or Alive Dimensions and Super Street Fighter IV 3D Edition—and they're the two best games in the handheld's library so far. As a fighting-game fan, I certainly hope things continue in this promising direction as we get further along in the N3DS life cycle. **—JUSTIN C.**





[Above] The battle against the colossal Surtur is one of the highlights of Thor: God of Thunder.

Full of Sound and Fury

THOR: GOD OF THUNDER

RATING: 5.5

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA**
DEVELOPER: **RED FLY STUDIO**
ESRB: **TEEN**

It shouldn't come as a surprise that Thor: God of Thunder isn't great—it *is* a licensed title, after all—but I was really looking for more; this game had a lot of potential. For one, it's made by Red Fly Studio, a developer that has experience in making fun Wii adventures (see Mushroom Men: The Spore Wars and Ghostbusters: The Video Game). For another, it's an action game in which you're *Thor*, the god of frickin' thunder.

Things kick off in typical Thor fashion: In this side story to the *Thor* film, Loki tricks his brother, Thor, which forces the god of thunder to travel to places such as the icy Niflheim and the fiery Muspelheim in order to save his homeworld of Asgard. But perhaps because there are a lot of concepts to introduce to Thor neophytes, the story is loaded with dull exposition. Throw in some not-visually-dynamic comic-book-style cut-scenes, and you've got a narrative that is less than compelling.

But you're playing a Thor game so that you can bash monsters in the face with a hammer, right? Well, there's plenty of hammer-bashing to go around—a little *too* much, actually, as the game throws wave after wave after wave of enemies at you across 16 levels. Fortunately, the combat is more involved than repeatedly tapping the A Button. Thor has a vast arsenal of moves at his disposal, from quick strikes (press A) to strong hammer blows (swing the Wii Remote controller). This works well in general; it's unfortunate, though, that the hits lack a feel of impact, the frame rate drops when the action gets too intense, and—most annoyingly—the game can have a tough time with successfully registering your intended remote gestures. You may want to knock an enemy into the air by flicking the remote upward, for example, but Thor slams his hammer onto the ground instead because the game thinks you're flicking downward. In this instance the inaccuracy is a mere irritation; when the motion-controlled Storm Powers and quick-time events come into play, things can get truly frustrating.

Still, the combat is fun for the most part, especially when you've unlocked new moves and ability-altering Runes. You feel like the god of thunder when you're able to dispatch enemies quickly by striking foes with lightning bolts or by unleashing a crowd-clearing cyclone. But you never feel more powerful than when you face the game's bosses. The fight against the sword-swinging Surtur is particularly cool. Not only are you facing a ginormous opponent, but the battle is also broken up by on-rails shooting segments. (In addition to this battle, the title has a couple of levels that feature on-rails gameplay.)

I was hoping for the best from Thor: God of Thunder, and this title clearly has some good ideas; it's just too bad that their execution wasn't as good as it should have been. —**JUSTIN C.**

WRITERS' BLOCK

WHAT'S YOUR ALL-TIME FAVORITE POWER-UP?

JUSTIN CHENG

The invincibility power-up from Sonic the Hedgehog, mainly because I really like the music that accompanies it.

CHRIS HOFFMAN

The correct answer is the spread gun from the Contra series. There's nothing more satisfying than tearing through enemies with that sucker.

CODY MARTIN

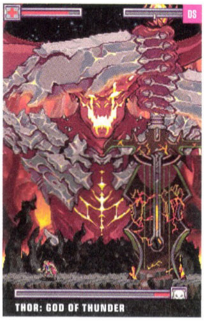
It would be a three-way tie between the Cape Feather from Super Mario World, Whacka's Bump from Paper Mario, and Suplex from Kirby Super Star.

CHRIS SLATE

More games need to include Kuribo's Shoe, the green, full-body boot Mario shoe-jacked from a Goomba in Super Mario Bros. 3. Just imagine how much better Twilight Princess, Pikmin, or Wii Music would be if you could crush people beneath its massive sole.

STEVE THOMASON

I'll go with Mario's very first power-up: the hammer from Donkey Kong. Not only is it iconic, but our beloved plumber swings it with the fury of ten thousand thunder gods.



THOR: GOD OF THUNDER

RATING: 6.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA**
DEVELOPER: **WAYFORWARD**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

As a longtime fan of 2D side-scrolling beat-'em-ups, I had pretty high hopes for Thor: God of Thunder. Unfortunately, even a deity can fall prey to that most pesky of villains: monotony. Sure, Marvel's bearded hero has some decent abilities—standard melee attacks, air juggles, grabs, hammer throws, meter-based magic powers, etc.—but the action isn't as fluid as it is in top-tier brawlers, and when you're using the same moves over and over for 20-plus cookie-cutter levels, it grows repetitive pretty quickly. Even some potentially cool hidden power-ups don't help. Toward the end of the game, a few elements (such as deadly rain and midstage minibosses) spice things up, but it doesn't make up for the lack of variety early on (and no, having rocks fall on you in a few stages doesn't count). The game does show signs of brilliance, especially during boss battles; unlike the majority of the quest, these clashes require skill and strategy to overcome, and they successfully tap into an old-school pattern-based vibe. A couple of the boss showdowns span both screens and feel downright epic. If that same consideration had gone into the rest of the product, this game might have been as divine as its name suggests. **—CHRIS H.**

Rather Absorbing

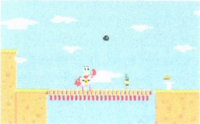
SPONGEBOB SQUIGGLEPANTS

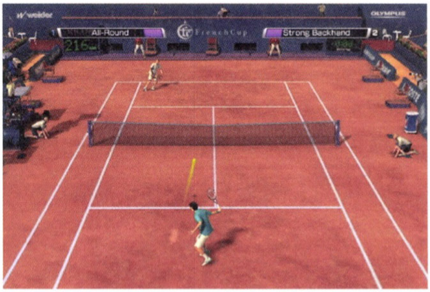
RATING: 7.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO 3DS**
PUBLISHER: **THQ**
DEVELOPER: **WAYFORWARD**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Since there's no WarioWare title yet scheduled for the Nintendo 3DS system, THQ has stepped in to fill the void with SpongeBob SquigglePants. If you've ever played a WarioWare game (or the Wii version of SpongeBob SquigglePants, which we reviewed last issue), then you know what you're in for—quirky humor, fast action, and tons of variety via a vast array of supershort minigames. Separated into several groups, each boasting a unique art style, the "nanogames" on offer provide a wide variety of activities and control methods. You'll flick the screen to strum a guitar, make circle motions to open a vault full of cheeseburgers, shake the system to smash through a city, tap the screen to select pizza toppings, draw paths to unite characters, slide the stylus to play Pong, hold the stylus against the screen to park a motorcycle, tilt the hardware to maintain balance, use the Circle Pad to ice-skate in a figure eight, and more. Not every nanogame is a winner, and the difficulty can be a little uneven (a card-matching activity in the first group is arguably the toughest challenge in the entire game), but what's here is pretty entertaining and easy to grasp. It's also a step up from its Wii counterpart thanks to the immediate tactile response of the touch screen. Even when the touch-screen input is used to indirectly control the action on the upper screen, the one-to-one responsiveness is quite satisfying. On the other hand, the 3D effects usually aren't anything special, and occasionally they hinder the gameplay (particularly in minigames that require you to rotate the system, which causes the image to blur). Save and load times are pretty severe, too. SpongeBob SquigglePants might not have the polish of its garlic-breathed inspiration, but it's a pretty solid title, even if you're not a SpongeBob fan.

—CHRIS H.





Comes Up Aces

VIRTUA TENNIS 4

RATING: 8.0

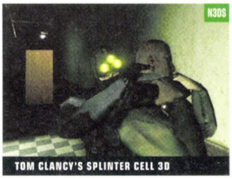
PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA**
DEVELOPER: **SEGA**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Since its debut over a decade ago, the Virtua Tennis franchise has offered some of the best arcade-tennis experiences ever with its accessible gameplay, pick-up-and-play controls, and wacky minigames. Virtua Tennis 4—which is actually the fifth iteration in the series (not accounting for the handheld titles)—continues on this course, bringing back what made the previous games great while also including fun new elements.

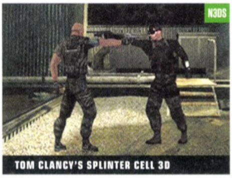
A welcome returning feature is the control scheme, which eschews Virtua Tennis 2009's motion controls and instead opts for the previous games' simple, traditional controls. Holding the Wii Remote controller NES-style means you don't feel like you're swinging a racket, but the primary benefit of this scheme is that the gameplay feels more precise overall. (It's certainly more precise than waving the controllers in Virtua Tennis 4's Motion Play mode, even if you have the Wii MotionPlus accessory attached to the remotes.) I do wish that the game supported the Nunchuk or the Classic Controller, however, as directing your player with the Control Stick would be easier on your thumb than moving your character around via the Control Pad.

Of course, there are plentiful new features, too. Aside from an updated roster that adds pros such as Juan Martin del Potro, Laura Robson, and Caroline Wozniacki, there's an entertaining board-game-style World Tour mode and an emphasis on taking advantage of each pro's play styles. Doing the latter fills the concentration gauge; once it's full, you can unleash a Super Shot. It's not as effective as the Power Shot in Mario Power Tennis for GameCube, but it is a nice arcadey touch.

Still, what makes Virtua Tennis 4 great is the multiplayer. And while we weren't able to hop online at the time of this writing, I had a great time participating in doubles tournaments with a colleague against the computer—even if some of the AI opponents got almost preternaturally good as the tournaments progressed. **—JUSTIN C.**



TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL 3D



TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL 3D

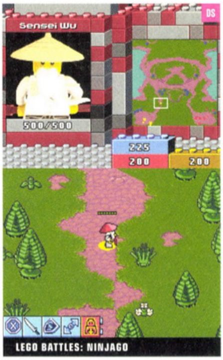
TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL 3D

RATING: 5.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO 3DS**
PUBLISHER: **UBISOFT**
DEVELOPER: **UBISOFT MONTREAL**
ESRB: **TEEN**

When it was first released on the Xbox in 2005, Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory was widely regarded as the pinnacle of the series and one of the greatest stealth offerings to date. Unfortunately, this newly christened Nintendo 3DS version of the game falls well short of the original. The biggest shortcomings stem from the handheld's lack of a second analog input; you have to use the face buttons to aim your weapon and manipulate the camera. That lacks the desired precision when you're hurriedly trying to avoid detection by enemy sentries, and it has a cascading effect on the rest of the controls. With the main buttons tied up, almost every other action must be relegated to either the touch screen or the Control Pad. It all adds up to a supremely clumsy interface that would completely ruin the experience if Splinter Cell weren't so deliberately paced for the most part.

To make matters worse, this lackluster port is missing the acclaimed multiplayer modes from the Xbox version (it has no online or wireless functionality to speak of), plus the content has been neutered to achieve a Teen rating. Likewise, the only addition is the 3D effect, and even that is less impactful than in most games for the system. Though the quality of Chaos Theory's single-player campaign still shines through from time to time, that's not enough to recommend such a lazy effort. **—STEVE T.**



LEGO BATTLES: NINJAGO

LEGO BATTLES: NINJAGO

RATING: 7.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **WARNER BROS. INTERACTIVE**
DEVELOPER: **HELLBENT GAMES**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

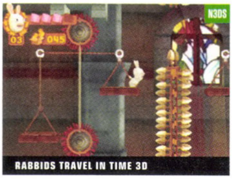
The battle between Spinjitzu-wielding ninjas and evil denizens of the underworld heats up in this content-packed portable jaunt into unusual territory. Venturing deep into the realm of real-time strategy, Ninjago's fresh mix of resource-gathering, building, and battle is a great fit for the series's exuberant vibe. Parallel campaigns for the ninja heroes and their skeletal adversaries offer tons of different missions to explore, and the game layers on its complexities gradually to ease newcomers into the groove. Though the stylus controls can be a little imprecise, the action flows smoothly otherwise. With a glut of collectibles to unlock and fun multiplayer modes to round out the hefty campaign, Ninjago is a satisfying new addition to the LEGO universe. **—NATHAN M.**

DS
4130 ×4
PERFECT
+60

RIO

Wii
1930
2834

RIO



RABBIDS TRAVEL IN TIME 3D

RIO

RATING: 5.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **THQ**
DEVELOPER: **THQ**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

At first glance, Rio for Nintendo DS seems to be a surprisingly charming licensed game. The title's primary gameplay strikes a delightful balance between a rhythm game and an on-rails platformer: your terrestrial bird simply runs/hops along, and you tap the screen whenever he approaches a musical note. Progressing through the game, however, leads to disappointment. Despite the title's attempts to keep things fresh with different scenery and achievements, songs are actually repeated during the story mode (even the last level is a repeat!). And the storyline—based on events from the Rio movie—certainly won't keep you interested. The gameplay made me really want to like this game, and I can't stress that enough. Unfortunately, everything else just falls flat. —**CODY M.**

RIO

RATING: 4.0

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **THQ**
DEVELOPER: **THQ**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

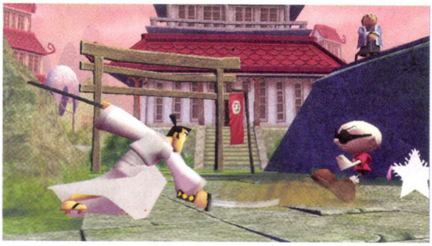
As if the Wii console needed another minigame collection, Rio features a small selection of generic four-player activities. They're mostly movie tie-in interpretations of common collection and goal-scoring minigame types, as well as free-for-all tag battles. If you choose to drudge your way through the story mode, you'll play all 40 games alongside a largely incoherent version of the *Rio* movie's storyline. To be fair, I must say that some of the minigames aren't terrible; I can see how a few could be entertaining to Rio's target audience (kids), but other minigame collections have done the same thing with better quality. Furthermore, a number of games are just slightly tweaked duplicates in an already limited collection. —**CODY M.**

RABBIDS TRAVEL IN TIME 3D

RATING: 6.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO 3DS**
PUBLISHER: **UBISOFT**
DEVELOPER: **UBISOFT PARIS**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Breaking from the minigame focus of the Wii version, Rabbids Travel in Time 3D offers classic platforming drenched in the wacky goofiness the franchise is known for. The game's four colorful worlds are filled with side-scrolling stages enhanced by some nice-looking 3D visual effects. Though they're pleasant to explore, the basic running, jumping, and whomping is quite easy and quickly grows repetitive. (Of course, that should be of little concern to the younger audience this game is geared toward.) Each level also has time-attack and collection modes worth exploring for those seeking to unlock the game's numerous wearable costumes and other collectible goodies. Rabbids Travel in Time 3D plays it simple and safe, relying on its charming presentation to carry the bulk of the weight. —**NATHAN M.**



Saturday-Morning Smackdown

CARTOON NETWORK PUNCH TIME EXPLOSION

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO 3DS**
PUBLISHER: **CRAVE ENTERTAINMENT**
DEVELOPER: **PAPAYA STUDIOS**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

Ever wanted to slice some fools as Samurai Jack or make Captain Planet hurt people? Cartoon Network Punch Time Explosion features a lineup of 18 brawlers from a variety of old and new Cartoon Network shows. Those familiar with Super Smash Bros. will largely feel at home with the gameplay. You've got moves such as shield blocking and triple jumps; you hit your opponents with a barrage of attacks until their damage percentage is high enough for them to be slammed off the level; attack methods include chargeable "smash" attacks, signature moves, and grabs; and you can perform a character-specific Punch Time Explosion—a powerful special move reminiscent of a Final Smash from Super Smash Bros. Brawl—after collecting enough of the Power Cubes that characters release when attacked.

Offering roughly six hours of play, Punch Time Explosion's mostly enjoyable single-player campaign is a side-scrolling beat-'em-up akin to the Subspace Emissary mode in Brawl. As you travel through universes of the game's respective characters, the action is peppered with first-person-shooter, mine-cart, and puzzle segments. And the narrator's commentary throughout the story mode is simply hilarious.

I was initially impressed by the quality of the game's overall presentation, but the clunky fighting mechanics are a big turn-off. Despite its uncanny aping, it's nowhere near as fluid as Super Smash Bros., and I often found myself wanting more-precise and -immediate control over my character. In solo mode it's more practical to just run past most enemies, since common NPCs aren't very affected by knockback and can spam you to death.

Punch Time Explosion is not a trendsetter; that's for certain. But with no portable Super Smash Bros. in sight, it's a likeable interpretation that will curb your cravings—or start them anew. —**CODY M.**

REVIEWS ARCHIVE

THE COMPLETE LIST OF NINTENDO POWER REVIEWS FROM THE PAST YEAR

SCORES REFLECT INDIVIDUAL REVIEWERS' OPINIONS

Wii

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa	6.5	Electronic Arts	254	E
All Star Karate	7.0	THQ	255	E10+
Arc Rise Fantasia	7.5	Ignition	256	T
Attack of the Movies 3D	4.0	Majesco	255	T
Batman: The Brave and the Bold: The Video Game	7.0	Warner Bros. Interactive	260	E10+
Calling	5.0	Hudson	253	T
Conduit 2	7.5	Sega	266	T
Create	5.0	Electronic Arts	262	E
Data East Arcade Classics	6.5	Majesco	252	T
de Blob 2	8.0	THQ	265	E
Deca Sports 3	4.5	Hudson	261	E
Despicable Me: The Game	4.0	D3Publisher	258	E10+
DJ Hero 2	9.0	Activision	262	T
Donkey Kong Country Returns	8.5	Nintendo	262	E
Endless Ocean: Blue World	7.5	Nintendo	252	E10+
Epic Mickey	8.5	Disney	263	E
FIFA Soccer 11	8.0	Electronic Arts	260	E
FlingSmash	7.5	Nintendo	261	E
Flip's Twisted World	6.0	Majesco	260	E
Fragile Dreams: Farewell Ruins of the Moon	5.5	XSEED	253	T
GoldenEye 007	8.5	Activision	262	T
Green Day: Rock Band	8.0	MTV	256	T
Guilty Party	7.0	Disney	259	E
Guitar Hero: Warriors of Rock	8.0	MTV	261	T
Gunblade NY & LA Machineguns Arcade Hits Pack	5.5	Sega	259	T
Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows–Part 1	4.0	Electronic Arts	262	T
Iron Man 2	4.0	Sega	256	T
Ivy the Kiwi?	7.5	XSEED	259	E
Kirby's Epic Yarn	8.5	Nintendo	261	E
The Last Airbender	6.0	THQ	257	T
LEGO Harry Potter: Years 1-4	7.5	Warner Bros. Interactive	257	E10+
LEGO Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	8.0	LucasArts	266	E10+
Legend of the Guardians: The Owls of Ga'Hoole	4.5	Warner Bros. Interactive	260	E10+
The Lord of the Rings: Aragorn's Quest	5.5	Warner Bros. Interactive	260	T
Lost In Shadow	8.0	Hudson	263	E10+
Madden NFL 11	8.5	Electronic Arts	258	E
Major League Baseball 2K10	7.0	2K Sports	253	E
Mario Sports Mix	8.0	Nintendo	264	E
Metroid: Other M	8.5	Nintendo	259	T
Michael Jackson: The Experience	6.5	Ubisoft	262	E10+
Monster Hunter Tri	9.0	Capcom	254	T
MySims Skyheroes	7.5	Electronic Arts	260	E10+
Namco Museum Megamix	5.0	Namco Bandai	261	E
Naruto Shippuden: Dragon Blade Chronicles	4.5	Tomy	262	E10+
NBA 2K11	6.5	2K Sports	261	E
NBA Jam	9.0	Electronic Arts	260	E
NHL Slapshot	6.0	Electronic Arts	259	E
No More Heroes 2: Desperate Struggle	9.0	Ubisoft	252	M
Pac-Man Party	4.5	Namco Bandai	262	E10+
Pirates Plundarrr	4.0	Majesco	255	E10+
PokéPark Wii: Pikachu's Adventure	7.5	Nintendo	261	E
Prince of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	8.0	Ubisoft	255	T
Racquet Sports	6.5	Ubisoft	253	E
Rango	5.0	Paramount	266	E10+
Raving Rabbids Travel In Time	6.5	Ubisoft	262	E10+
Red Steel 2	8.0	Ubisoft	254	T
Rock Band 3	9.0	MTV	261	T
Sakura Wars: So Long, My Love	7.5	NIS America	253	T
Sam & Max: Beyond Time and Space	8.0	Atari	255	T
Samurai Warriors 3	6.0	Nintendo	260	T
Sengoku Basara: Samurai Heroes	7.0	Capcom	261	T
Shiren the Wanderer	6.5	Atlus	252	T
Sid Meier's Pirates!	8.5	2K Games	260	E10+
Sin and Punishment: Star Successor	9.0	Nintendo	257	T
Sonic Colors	9.0	Sega	261	E
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	8.0	Sega	252	E
Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions	8.0	Activision	260	T
SpongeBob SquigglePants	7.0	THQ	266	E
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II	8.0	LucasArts	261	T
Super Mario All-Stars	9.0	Nintendo	263	E
Super Mario Galaxy 2	9.5	Nintendo	256	E
Super Monkey Ball Step & Roll	5.5	Sega	252	E
Swords	5.0	Majesco	260	T
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 11	9.0	Electronic Arts	256	E
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 12: The Masters	8.5	Electronic Arts	266	E
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	6.0	Ubisoft	262	T
Top Spin 4	7.0	2K Sports	266	E
Tournament of Legends	7.0	Sega	257	T
Toy Story 3: The Video Game	7.5	Disney	257	E10+
Transformers: Cybertron Adventures	5.0	Activision	258	T
Trauma Team	8.0	Atlus	255	T
TRON: Evolution–Battle Grids	6.5	Disney	263	E10+
Wii Party	7.5	Nintendo	260	E
Worms: Battle Islands	7.0	THQ	264	E10+
WWE All Stars	6.5	THQ	266	T
WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2011	7.5	THQ	262	T

MORE ON:

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 2011 3D

I'm more of a FIFA player, but Pro Evolution Soccer 2011 3D makes a good argument for switching sides. The graphics in this title are truly impressive—whether the game is in 3D or not. Because I'm so used to playing FIFA, the controls took some getting used to, but I got the hang of things eventually. I wish this game had online play and better menus, though. —JUSTIN C.

MORE ON:

BUST-A-MOVE UNIVERSE

I've been a Bust-A-Move fan for a long time; it's probably my all-time favorite puzzle series next to Tetris. The fact of the matter, however, is that the series hasn't evolved much over the years, and that holds true with this version for the Nintendo 3DS. Matching colors and popping bubbles is still fun, but the game doesn't offer anything new beyond the 3D visuals (which don't affect gameplay at all). Universe is best suited to series newcomers (especially since the difficulty is pretty mild) or Bust-A-Move fanatics. —CHRIS H.

LV.
0
NEXT
SPECIAL

Nintendo DS

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
Ace Attorney Investigations: Miles Edgeworth	**8.0**	Capcom	252	T
Again	**7.0**	Tecmo Koei	253	T
Atari's Greatest Hits Vol. 1	**5.0**	Atari	261	E
ATV Wild Ride	**7.0**	Destineer	264	E
Beat City	**8.5**	THQ	254	E
Blue Dragon: Awakened Shadow	**7.5**	D3Publisher	256	E10+
Crafting Mama	**7.0**	Majesco	261	E
Crime Scene	**5.0**	SouthPeak	253	M
Dawn of Heroes	**7.5**	Majesco	253	E10+
de Blob 2	**8.0**	THQ	265	E
Deca Sports DS	**5.5**	Hudson	253	E
Dementium II	**8.0**	SouthPeak	255	M
Despicable Me: The Game–Minion Mayhem	**7.0**	D3Publisher	258	E
Dragon Ball: Origins 2	**8.0**	Namco Bandai	256	T
Dragon Quest VI: Realms of Revelation	**7.5**	Nintendo	265	T
Dragon Quest IX: Sentinels of the Starry Skies	**9.0**	Nintendo	257	E10+
Etrian Odyssey III: The Drowned City	**8.5**	Altus	260	E10+
Final Fantasy: The 4 Heroes of Light	**8.0**	Square Enix	260	E10+
Ghost Trick: Phantom Detective	**9.0**	Capcom	263	T
Giana Sisters DS	**9.0**	Destineer	265	E
Golden Sun: Dark Dawn	**8.0**	Nintendo	262	E10+
Harvest Moon: Grand Bazaar	**6.0**	Natsume	258	E
Infinite Space	**8.0**	Sega	253	T
Iron Man 2	**6.5**	Sega	256	E10+
Ivy the Kiwi?	**7.0**	XSEED	259	E
Kingdom Hearts Re:coded	**8.0**	Square Enix	263	E10+
The Last Airbender	**7.5**	THQ	257	E10+
LEGO Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	**8.0**	LucasArts	266	E
Lufia : Curse of the Sinistrals	**8.0**	Natsume	260	E10+
Mario vs. Donkey Kong: Mini-Land Mayhem!	**7.5**	Nintendo	262	E
Mega Man Zero Collection	**9.0**	Capcom	256	E
Monster Tale	**8.0**	**Majesco**	**265**	**E**
Naruto Shippuden: Naruto vs. Sasuke	**5.0**	Tomy	262	E10+
Naruto Shippuden: Shinobi Rumble	**6.0**	Tomy	264	T
Nine Hours, Nine Persons, Nine Doors	**9.0**	Aksys	262	M
Okamiden	**8.0**	Capcom	265	E10+
Picross 3D	**7.5**	Nintendo	255	E
Plants vs. Zombies	**9.0**	PopCap	264	E10+
Pokémon Black and Pokémon White Versions	**9.0**	Nintendo	265	E
Pokémon HeartGold and Pokémon SoulSilver Versions	**9.5**	Nintendo	253	E
Pokémon Ranger: Guardian Signs	**7.0**	Nintendo	260	E
Professor Layton and the Unwound Future	**9.0**	Nintendo	260	E10+
Puzzle Quest 2	**7.5**	D3Publisher	257	E10+
Radiant Historia	**8.5**	Atlus	265	E10+
Ragnarok DS	**5.0**	XSEED	252	E10+
Rango	**7.0**	Paramount	266	E
River City Soccer Hooligans	**7.0**	Aksys	256	T
River City Super Sports Challenge	**6.0**	Aksys	258	T
Rooms: The Main Building	**7.0**	Hudson	253	E
Rune Factory 3: A Fantasy Harvest Moon	**8.5**	Natsume	262	E
Shin Megami Tensei: Strange Journey	**8.0**	Atlus	253	M
Sonic Colors	**7.5**	Sega	261	E
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	**6.0**	Sega	252	E
Sonic Classic Collection	**7.0**	Sega	253	E
Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions	**7.0**	Activision	260	E10+
Squishy Tank	**8.0**	Natsume	253	E
Super Scribblenauts	**8.5**	Warner Bros. Interactive	261	E
Tetris Party Deluxe	**8.5**	Majesco	256	E
Transformers: War for Cybertron	**7.0**	Activision	258	E10+
TRON: Evolution	**6.5**	Disney	263	E10+
WarioWare D.I.Y.	**8.5**	Nintendo	253	E

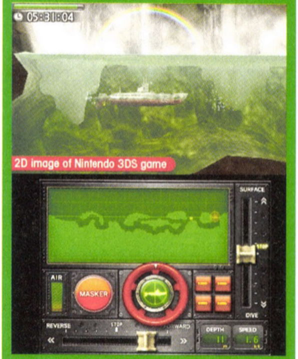
Nintendo 3DS

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
Asphalt 3D	**6.0**	Ubisoft	266	E10+
LEGO Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	**8.5**	LucasArts	266	E10+
Madden NFL Football	**6.0**	Electronic Arts	266	E
nintendogs + cats	**7.5**	Nintendo	266	E
Pilotwings Resort	**8.0**	Nintendo	266	E
Rayman 3D	**8.0**	Ubisoft	266	E
Ridge Racer 3D	**8.0**	Namco Bandai	266	E
Samurai Warriors: Chronicles	**7.0**	Tecmo Koei	266	T
The Sims 3	**7.0**	Electronic Arts	266	T
Steel Diver	**8.0**	**Nintendo**	**266**	**E10+**
Super Monkey Ball 3D	**7.5**	Sega	266	E
Super Street Fighter IV 3D Edition	**9.0**	Capcom	266	T
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Shadow Wars	**8.0**	Ubisoft	266	T

MORE ON:

STEEL DIVER

I went into Steel Diver expecting a naval combat game, but it's really more of an old-school sidescroller with a focus on navigating through obstacle-ridden courses. That's not necessarily a bad thing, and I really love the unique control interface. After a couple of hours, though, the slow pace and lack of variety start to drag things down. —**STEVE T.**

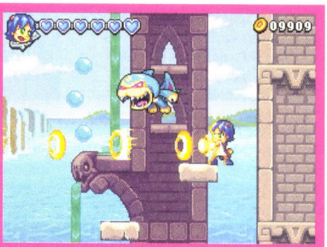


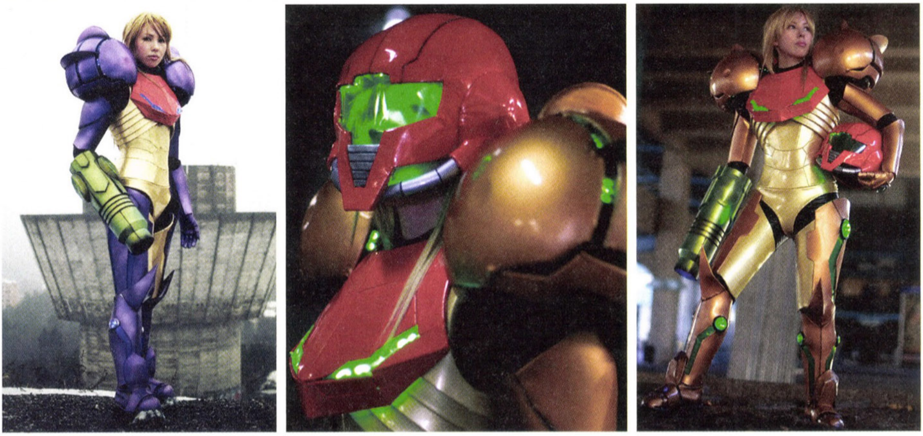
2D image of Nintendo 3DS game

MORE ON:

MONSTER TALE

While Monster Tale isn't quite up to the high adventure-maze standards set by the Metroid and Castlevania series, it's still pretty addictive. The game is too linear (what's the point of exploring a maze if there isn't anything to find off the beaten path?), but it's high on charm and the play mechanics feel great. —CHRIS S.





Reader Jenni Källberg continues to wow us. This is as close to a real-life Samus as it gets.

COSPLAY

Sensational Samus Suits

Metroid's heroine is honored with a pair of cosplay tributes.

JENNI KÄLLBERG first impressed us with her costume-construction skills back in Vol. 224, thanks to her amazing re-creation of Samus's Varia Suit from the Metroid series. Made of PVC fabric, foam, and cardboard, the suit brought one of gaming's most iconic outfits to life. Nonetheless, the Stockholm, Sweden-based IT consultant knew she could top it. "I made the Varia Suit once before, but I wasn't 100% happy with it," she explains, "so I wanted to make a new version using different techniques and materials."

But Källberg didn't stop there—as evidenced by these excellent photos, she made both a new version of the Varia Suit and a Gravity Suit, executing both with incredible detail and precision. "Samus is one of my favorite characters and I really wanted to challenge myself," she notes.

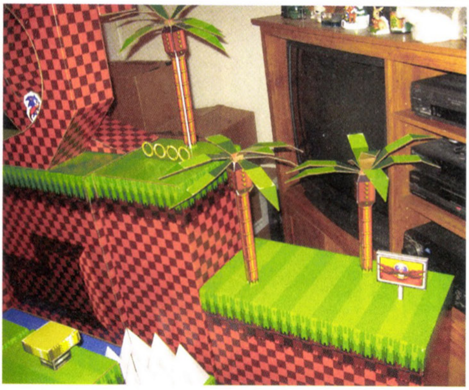
Källberg worked on both suits at the same time, and each began life on the drawing board, where she would sketch out armor pieces to make sure the proportions were correct. As soon as they were, she would cut the pieces out of Lionboard—a flexible polyurethane foam board popular with cosplayers—before cutting out stretch-vinyl fabric and gluing that to the board.

Once the core pieces were assembled, she airbrushed each with the bronze or purple paints needed for each suit then covered the paint with a clear coat usually used for automobiles. When the pieces required lights, she affixed them and a battery-pack holder using hot glue. If you'd like more detail on the construction process, you can view dozens of photos of the laborious effort on her website, located at http://pixelninja.se.

Källberg tells us the entire project spanned about six months and required a considerable out-of-pocket expense: just over $400 US, split almost evenly between the materials and the shipping costs and customs fees for importing them from Japan. Luckily, both the expense and effort seem well justified, considering the excellent results and positive feedback from fans. "I wore the Varia Suit to the Swedish convention Gamex in November and got a great response," Källberg relates, noting that the suits are pretty comfortable and rain-resistant, and offer nearly a full range of motion.

Following this massive undertaking and having also produced Zelda and Princess Peach costumes in recent years, Källberg says she'll be taking a break from costume creation. She was featured in Vol. 263 for her impressive Kirby's Epic Yarn fabric art, and says she plans to focus more on her paintings and drawings during the costuming break. We hope that break is short: we're eager to see more of her amazing cosplay efforts soon! **—ANDREW H.**

GRAVITY SUIT PHOTOGRAPHS BY RIKARD LB; VARIA SUIT PHOTOGRAPHS BY CARL OSCAR AARO



FANDOM

Sonic to the Extreme!

Dedicated fans take the Green Hill Zone to the next level with this papercraft masterpiece.

MOST SONIC THE HEDGEHOG FANS don't have a massive papercraft replica of the Green Hill Zone engulfing their living room, but Trevor Lyons is not like most Sonic fans. To commemorate the birthday of everyone's favorite speedy blue hedgehog (who turns 20 this year), Lyons, 27, of Cranbury, NJ, gathered a few friends together and set out to re-create a huge chunk of the original game's first level.

"The concept came to me as I was doodling a picture of Sonic," says Lyons about the inspiration for his project. "While I was drawing, I remembered that Sega released a miniature Green Hill Zone papercraft years ago and thought it would be cool to make a bigger and better version of it."

With the help of pals Mark Scott Jr. and Chris Jensen, he did just that. Designing and building the project took about a week from start to finish. The final graphic design for the papercraft stage was printed out on semigloss paper and laminated onto corrugated board for stability before everything was hot-glued in place. It took the group 10 hours to fully assemble the level, which is close to six feet tall at its highest point, but that wasn't even the trickiest task.

"Designing the loop was probably the most challenging part," says Lyons. "[Turning] a 2D shape like that into an actual structure took a bit of time to figure out, but I think it came out to be pretty accurate to the game." —**NATHAN M.**

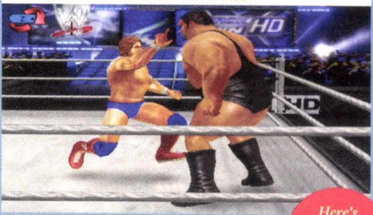
Can you imagine having this enormous structure sitting in your living room?

WRITE *your own* CAPTION

SCREEN TEST

SEND CAPTION TO screentest@nintendopower.com.

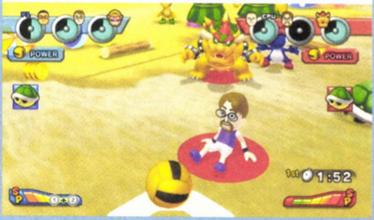
THIS MONTH'S SHOT



The match came to an abrupt end when Roddy Piper got a splinter in his index finger.

Here's our caption. THINK YOU CAN DO BETTER?

VOLUME 265'S SHOT



"Hey, I thought Bumblebee was a car Transformer, not a dodgeball Transformer!" —**JOHNNY S.**

"What started as mild internal strife erupted into tragedy when the Hoff called Bowser an 'overgrown lizard.'" —**METALMATTRESS**

"This is the worst game of Twister I have ever played! There's only one dot on the mat!" —**MATT S.**

"It was only after Bowser got to gym class that he realized dodgeballs are more lethal than Bob-ombs." —**JACKOOSH**

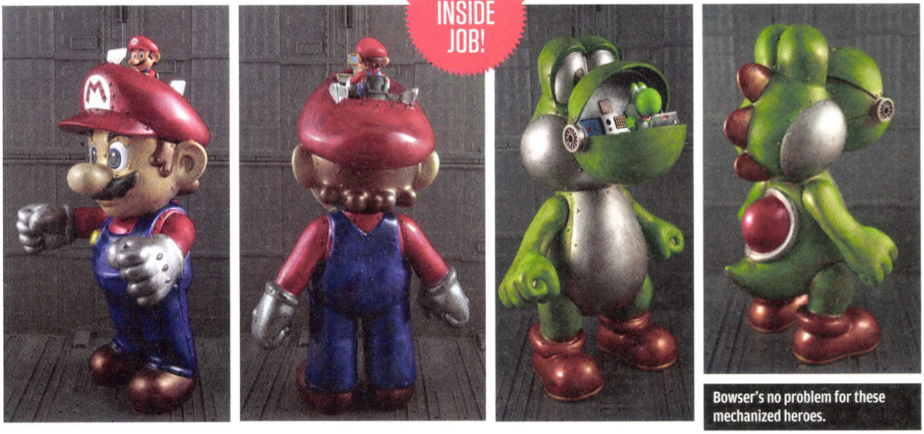
"The only words the Hoff remembered saying before taking a ball to the noggin was, 'Do these shorts make my butt look big?'" —**EVEN4LIFE**

"They no longer wanted to play with Hoff at the company picnic when they realized he didn't put on deodorant." —**(NO NAME GIVEN)**

ABOVE *and* BEYOND

Got art, cosplay, case mods, etc.? Send them to us via email to **community@nintendopower.com** or via snail mail to Nintendo Power/Community c/o Future US, 4000 Shoreline Court, STE 400, South San Francisco, CA 94080. We'll print the best stuff!

AN INSIDE JOB!



Bowser's no problem for these mechanized heroes.

FANDOM

Mecha Mario!

What's underneath that colorful exterior may surprise you.

MANY OF US have wondered about the inner workings of our favorite Nintendo characters—what makes them tick, if you will—and these fantastic custom figures offer one possible answer: a smaller version of themselves! Each of these creations comes from Donald Kennedy, a 30-year-old computer engineer from El Paso, Texas, and as seen in the photos, the large, mech-stylized versions of Mario and Yoshi open up to reveal a more traditional-looking figure at the controls.

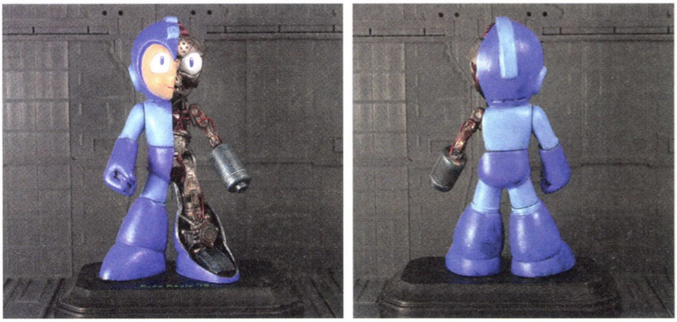
We've covered a couple of Kennedy's previous creations—a paper-clip Mario Kart in Vol. 243 and a custom A Boy and His Blob figure set in Vol. 253—but these inventive interpretations really take the cake, offering a new way of looking at the iconic heroes. "My brother and I talk about some really weird combos," Kennedy admits, "and a conversation came up where we thought it would be cool to have characters from the Mario universe drive giant mechs of themselves."

Each custom figure started with one of the officially released 10-inch vinyl figures and a smaller version, plus straight pins used for the rivets. Mario's cockpit came from an RDA Combat Amp Suit from the Avatar movie's toy line, while Yoshi's control center is built on a combination of LEGO laptops and a Playmobil police-call-center console. After filling in some holes on each vinyl figure with epoxy clay, Kennedy began the arduous painting process, which he says was the hardest part of each project.

Mario and Yoshi each required about 20 hours of work, but Kennedy says he spent only about $20-30 on materials for each, as he keeps a lot of spare parts around from his numerous projects. He plans to create a Luigi figure in the same style to round out the collection, but he also recently took a shot at transforming a large Mega Man figure to explore what his robotic insides would look like on full display.

"I have been noticing a lot of sculptures that showed the anatomy of vinyl figures, and I wanted to try my hand at it," says Kennedy. "I am not a great sculptor, so I thought I would do what I knew best—and that is robots." For this project, he sliced open a Mega Man vinyl figure and used a myriad of parts handy from other figures to construct a unique glimpse at the character's insides, with the final product marrying the Blue Bomber's glossy exterior with the gritty nuts and bolts that make him a hero. Kennedy took about 15 hours nailing Mega Man's look, with most of that time spent fine-tuning the paint job.

Kennedy's not done putting Nintendo's stars into surprising new roles: next up is a series of Nintendo characters transformed into zombies; Yoshi will head up the pack. They may be terrifying, but they'll undoubtedly also be terrific. You can follow Kennedy's progress and see his other creations at http://kodykoala.com. **—ANDREW H.**



COMIC HEROES

THE MAGAZINE ALL COMICS FANS HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR...

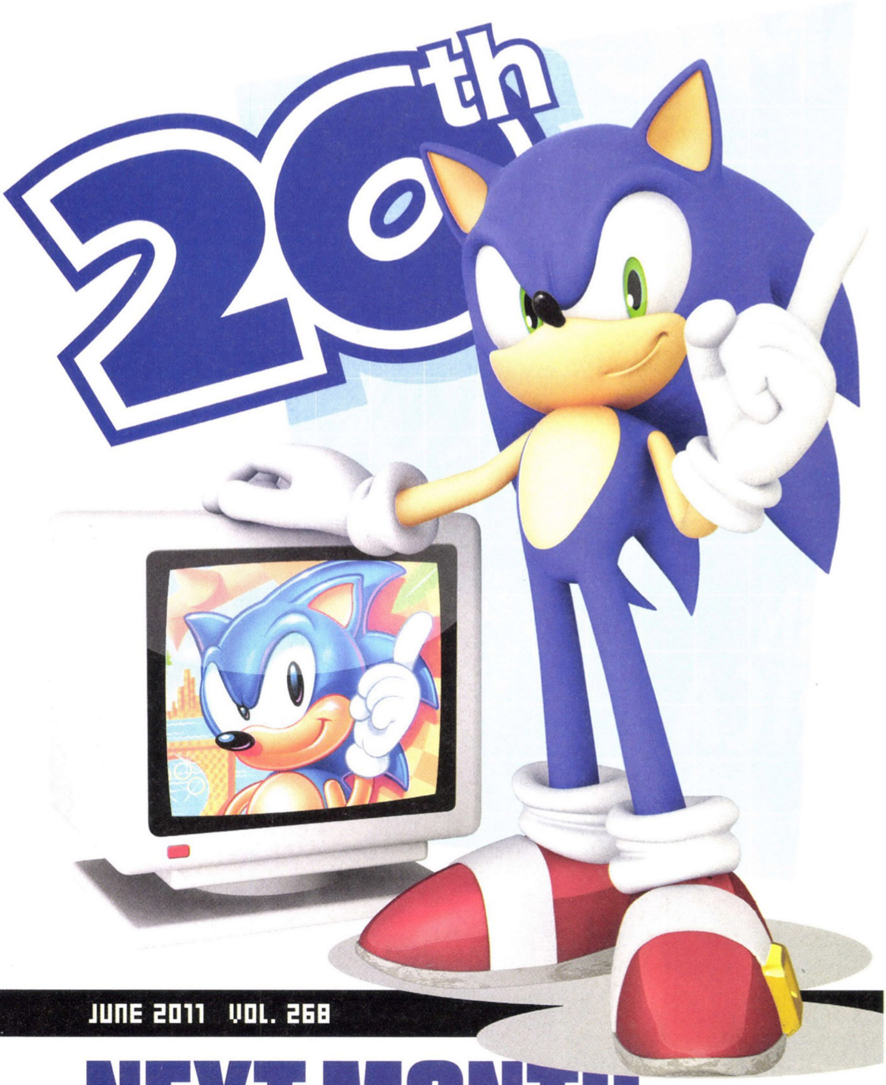
3 FREE GIFTS!
SIDEKICK COMIC
READ NEW STRIPS FROM BRYAN TALBOT, PAT MILLS, EDDIE CAMPBELL AND MORE!
HELLBOY BPRD
SEW-ON PATCH
GIANT DOUBLE SIDED POST
COMICS • GRAPHIC NOVELS • MOVIES • TV • GAMES
NEW! ISSUE TWO
COMIC HEROES
CAPTAIN AMERICA LIVES!
THE NEW MOVIE, THE COMICS, THE CLASSIC STORIES – EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW!
"I'M RI TH
ALAN
GREEN LANTERN/ GREEN ARROW
Their classic '70s road trip revisited
DEVIL INSIDE
Mike Mignola talks all things Hellboy
COMICS CRAZY! THE ONLY MAGAZINE DEDICATED TO ALL THINGS COMICS!
PLUS!
PREACHER NEMESIS THE WARLOCK CHARLIE ADLARD
STAN LEE HOW TO WRITE COMICS AND
The FLASH
AFTER THE BLACKEST NIGHT COMES THE BRIGHTEST DAY
BUREAU FOR PARANORMAL RESEARCH AND DEFENSE
PLUS!
NEW! SIDEKICK
THE BEST NEW COMICS PREVIEWED INSIDE!
Featuring...
GRANDVILLE MON AMOUR By BRYAN TALBOT
THE PLAYWRIGHT By EDDIE CAMPBELL & DAREN WHITE
AMERICAN REAPER By PAT MILLS & CLINT LANGLEY
Plus! THE RAINBOW ORCHID, DORIS DANGER GIANT MONSTER ADVENTURES, NOT ONE MINUTE OF SILENCE & URBAN BEASTS

3 FREE GIFTS!

- Giant double sided poster
- BPRD sew-on patch
- Sidekick sampler comic

COMIC HEROES ISSUE 2 ON SALE NOW

WWW.COMICHEROESMAGAZINE.COM



JUNE 2011 VOL. 268

NEXT MONTH

Has it really been 20 years since Sonic the Hedgehog first raced onto the scene? That makes us feel old. Nevertheless, we'll set down the prune juice and climb off our Rascal scooters for a big celebration of the Blue Blur's landmark anniversary. Fans young and old won't want to miss it!

NINTENDO POWER (ISSN 1041-9551) is published monthly by Future US, Inc., 4000 Shoreline Court, Suite 400, South San Francisco, CA 94080. Phone: (650) 872-1642. Fax (650) 872-2207. Website: www.futureus.com. Periodicals postage paid in South San Francisco, CA and at additional mailing offices. Newsstand distribution is handled by Time Warner Retail. Subscriptions: One year basic rate (12 issues): US: $19.95. Canada: US$27.95. Canadian orders must be prepaid. Canadian price includes postage and GST (GST #R128220688). PMA #40612608. Subscriptions do not include newsstand specials.

POSTMASTER: Send changes of address to: Nintendo Power, PO Box 5770, Harlan, IA 51593-1270. Standard Mail Enclosure in the following editions: None. Ride-Along Enclosure in the following editions: None. Returns: Pitney Bowes, PO Box 25542, London, ON N6C 6B2, Canada. Future US, Inc. also publishes @ Gamer, Crochet Today!, Guitar Aficionado, Guitar World, Knitting Today!, Mac|Life, Maximum PC, The Official Xbox Magazine, PlayStation: The Official Magazine, PC Gamer, Revolver, Windows: The Official Magazine, and World of Warcraft Official Magazine. Entire contents copyright 2011, Future US, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part is prohibited. Future US, Inc. is not affiliated with the companies or products covered in Nintendo Power. Reproduction on the Internet of the articles and pictures in this magazine is illegal without the prior written consent of Nintendo Power. Products named in the pages of Nintendo Power are trademarks of their respective companies. PRODUCED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

SUBSCRIBER CUSTOMER SERVICE: Nintendo Power Customer Care, P.O. Box 5770, Harlan, IA 51593-1270. Online: www.nintendopower.com/customerservice. Phone: 1-866-941-2368. Email NTNcustserv@cdsfulfillment.com.

BACK ISSUES: www.nintendopower.com/shop or by calling 1-800-865-7240.

REPRINTS: Future US, Inc., 4000 Shoreline Court, Suite 400, South San Francisco, CA 94080. Phone: (650) 872-1642. Fax (650) 872-2207. Website: www.futureus.com.

ELECTRONIC ENTERTAINMENT EXPO
E3
EXCEEDING
IMAGINATION

E3 Expo is the preeminent global trade event for computer and video games. It's all about the innovation, creativity, business, and imagination of the most compelling sector of the entertainment industry.

EXPERIENCE ALL THAT E3 EXPO HAS TO OFFER BY REGISTERING TODAY AT WWW.E3EXPO.COM.

esa entertainment software association

LOS ANGELES CONVENTION CENTER

JUNE 7-9, 2011

WWW.E3EXPO.COM

E3 Expo is a trade event and only qualified industry professionals may attend.
No one under 17 will be admitted, including infants. Visit www.E3Expo.com for registration guidelines.

Produced By
IDG WORLD EXPO

© 2011 ENTERTAINMENT SOFTWARE ASSOCIATION

Centrum
Multivitamin/Multimineral Supplement
100 TABLETS
ULTRA WOMEN'S

Centrum®

Wii Fit™ Plus

THE RIGHT STEPS TO A HEALTHIER YOU

STEP 1 Buy specially marked Centrum® to help bridge nutritional gaps and look for your code on-pack
No payment or purchase necessary*

STEP 2 Register for your chance to
WIN a Wii Fit™ Plus prize package
and other prizes every day for 60 days

STEP 3 Take Centrum® daily, and get active with Wii Fit™ Plus.

NEW Activities! Custom Routines!
Wii Fit Plus
Nintendo
Centrum
#1 DOCTOR RECOMMENDED MULTIVITAMIN
Centrum
Multivitamin/Multimineral Supplement
Zinc

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Mild Cartoon Violence

www.centrumgetfit.com

*NO PURCHASE OR PAYMENT NECESSARY. Open to legal residents of 50 U.S/D.C., 18 & older. Void where prohibited. Begins 12:00:01 AM (ET) on 4/14/11; ends 11:59:59 PM (ET) on 6/12/11. For free entry, prize details & Official Rules go to www.centrumgetfit.com. Sponsor: Wyeth LLC, Madison, New Jersey.

© 2007 - 2009 Nintendo. Wii Fit and Wii are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2011 Pfizer Inc.

Pokémon™
BLACK VERSION
ENTER A NEW WORLD WITH OVER 150 NEW POKÉMON!
Pokémon™
WHITE VERSION
NINTENDO DS™
The Pokémon Company
Nintendo®
EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Comic Mischief
Mild Cartoon Violence

© 2011 Pokémon. © 1995-2011 Nintendo/Creatures Inc./GAME FREAK inc.
Pokémon and Nintendo DS are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2011 Nintendo.

Made with love by

RETROMAGS

Our goal is to preserve classic video game magazines so that they are not lost permanently.

People interested in helping out in any capacity, please visit us at retromags.com.

No profit is made from these scans, nor do we offer anything available from the publishers themselves.

If you come across anyone selling releases from this site, please do not support them and do let us know.

Thank you!